TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION, VOL. 4

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION, VOLUME 4

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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #48

First Printing: June 1992
Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
Shades Of Gray, Part One.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #49

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Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Tones by Eric Talbot,
Lettering by Mary Kelleher
Shades Of Gray, Part Two.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #50

First Printing: August 1992
Story and Art by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part One.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #51

First Printing: September 1992
Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part Two.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #52

First Printing: October 1992
Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part Three.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #53

First Printing: November 1992
Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Matt Banning, Tones by Eric Talbot,
Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part Four.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #54

First Printing: December 1992
Story by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, Script by Peter Laird and Jim Lawson,
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Inking Assist by Charles Yoakum,
Tones by Eric Talbot, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part Five.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #55

First Printing: January 1993
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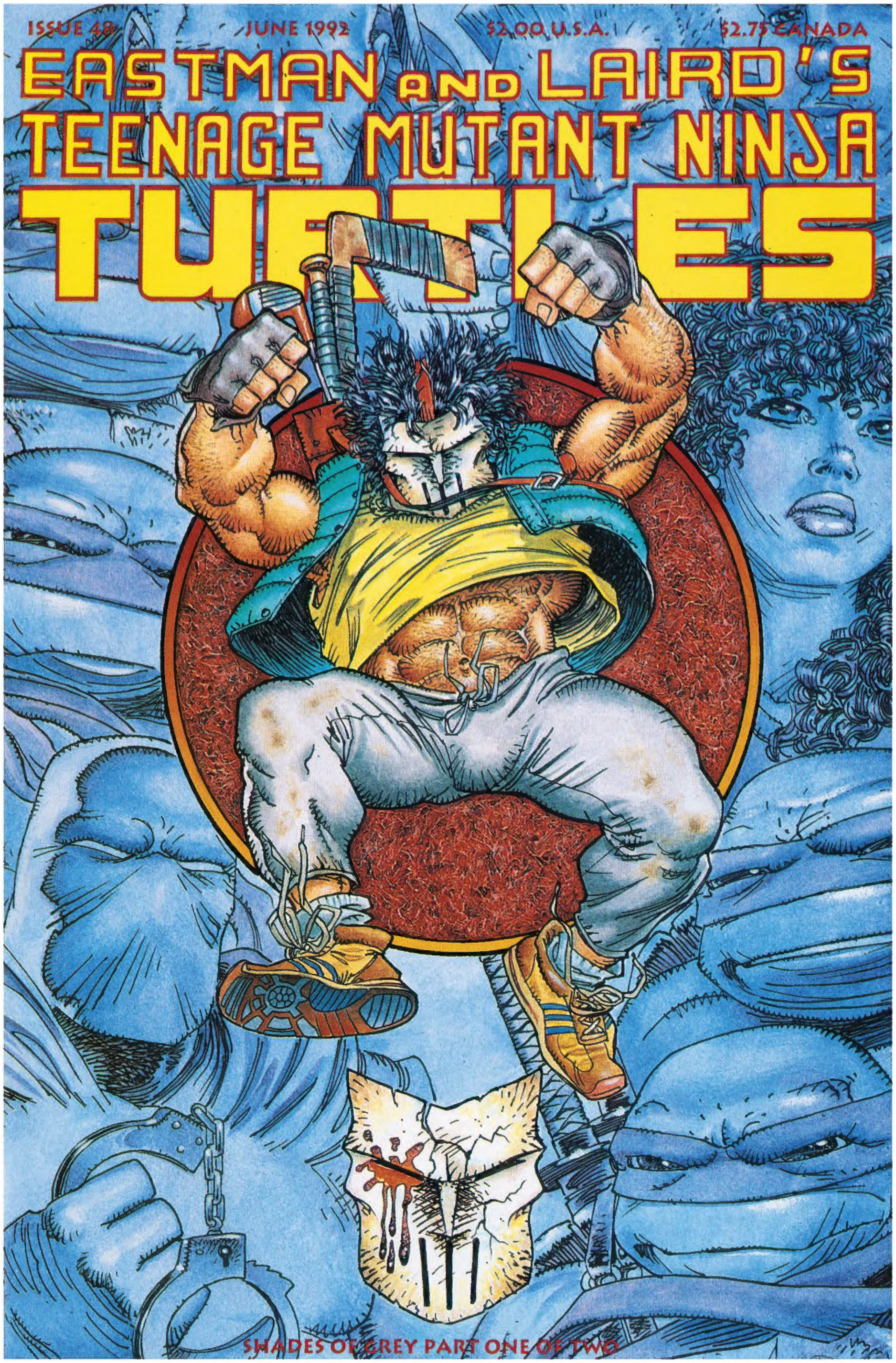
Pencils by Jim Lawson, Inks by Keith Aiken, Inking Assist by Charles Yoakum,
Tones by Eric Talbot, Lettering by Mary Kelleher
City At War, Part Six.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JUNE 1992
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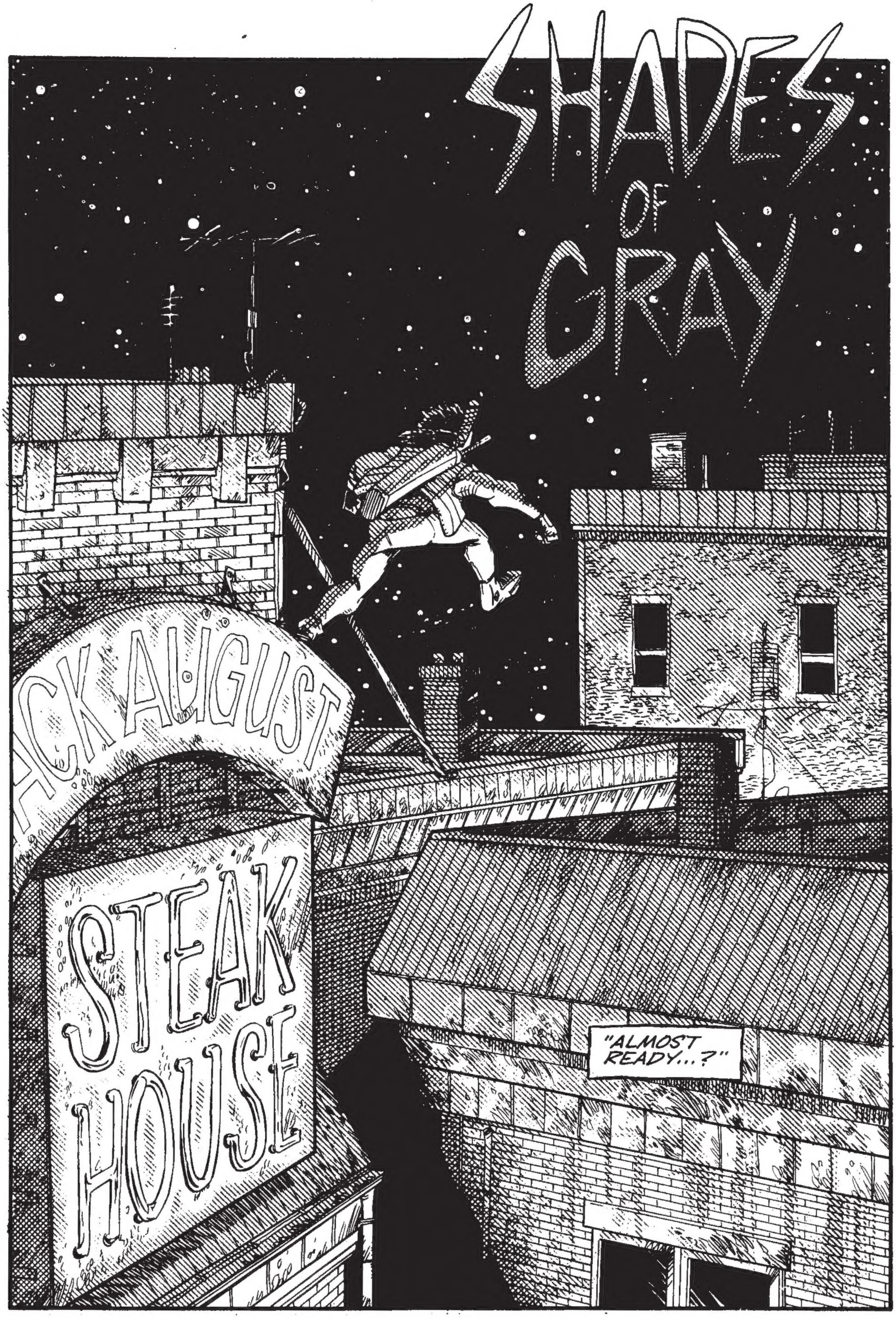
EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
SHADES OF GREY PART ONE OF TWO

#48


SHADES OF GRAY
CK·AUGUST
STEAK HOUSE
"ALMOST READY...?"

C'MON, GUYS -- LET'S SHAKE IT!

...YOU SOUND ALMOST **TOO** PSYCHED ABOUT TONIGHT!

IT WILL BE A GOOD TEST FOR US BESIDES, I LIKE SPRINGFIELD... REMINDS ME OF NEW YORK.

YEAH, WELL, I THINK IT'S A BOGUS EXERCISE.

YOU **KNOW** CASEY'S NOT GONNA PLAY FAIR...

JEEZ, LEO...

MAYBE THAT'S WHY MASTER SPLINTER CHOSE HIM... ANYWAY, WHERE'S DONATELLO?

WHERE DO YOU THINK?

I'LL GET HIM!

HEY, GUYS -- I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG PROJECT... CAN YOU MANAGE WITHOUT ME?

SURE SOUNDS LIKE A WIENIE EXCUSE TO ME, DONNIE-BOY!

IT'S UP TO SPLINTER, DON...

MASTER...? I COULD REALLY USE THE TIME TO GET THIS SYSTEM DEBUGGED.

ALTHOUGH YOU ARE STILL MY STUDENT, DONATELLO, I MUST ALLOW YOU THE FREEDOM TO FIND YOUR OWN PATH. IF YOU BELIEVE THAT PATH TO BE HERE, THEN STAY.

THANKS, MASTER.

3

YOU THREE, LISTEN. APRIL WILL DRIVE YOU TO THE MEMORIAL BRIDGE. CASEY HAS A THREE-HOUR HEAD START. IF YOU HAVE NOT FOUND HIM BY ONE A.M., HE'LL RETURN HERE.

BUT, MASTER SPLINTER, WHAT DO WE DO IF WE CAN'T FIND CASEY?

WALK HOME.

WALK--! BUT THAT'S OVER TWENTY MILES!

THEN I SUGGEST YOU START LOOKING FOR CASEY ... ***NOW***!

APRIL...?

BE RIGHT WITH YOU-- LET ME GET MY PURSE!

SPRINGFIELD POLICE SEEK COSTUMED VIGILANTE

RA

4

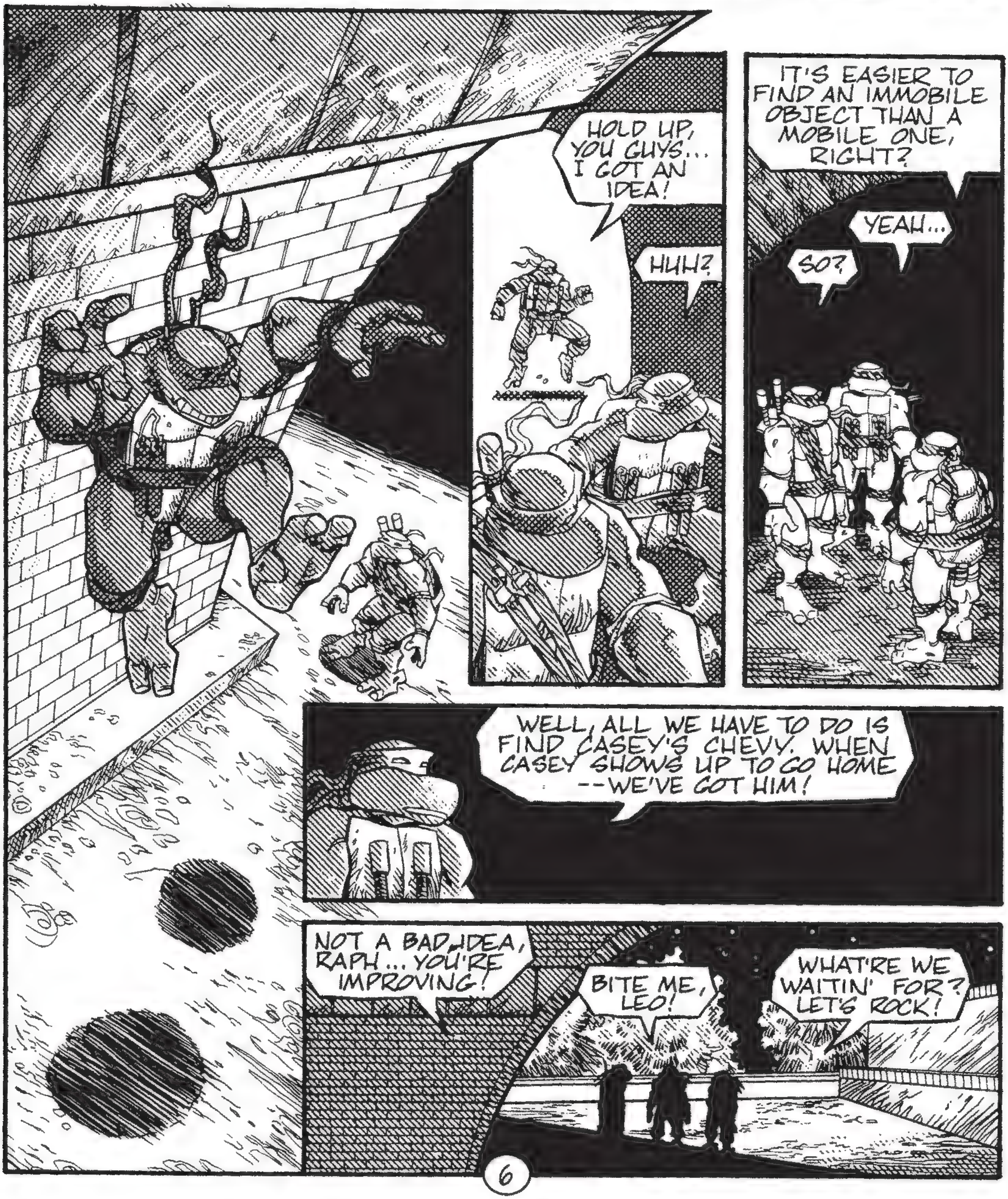
uth

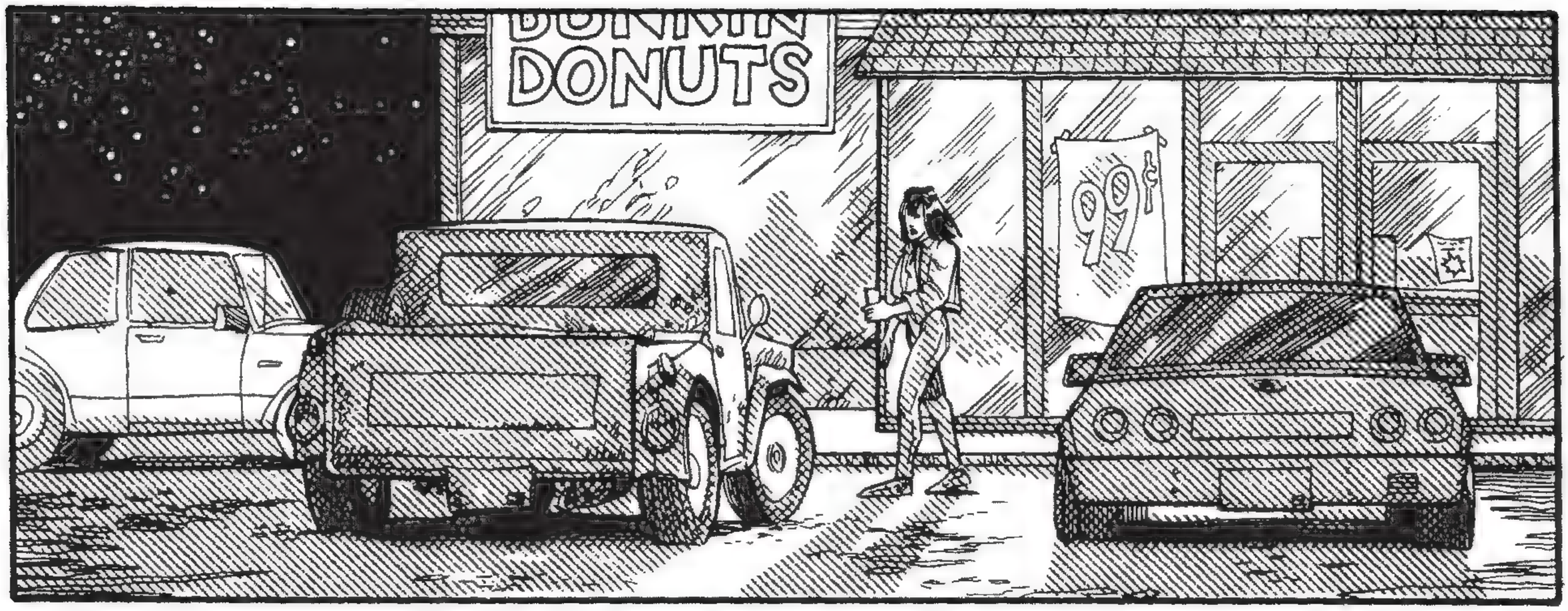
Sprin

Memo

NEXT

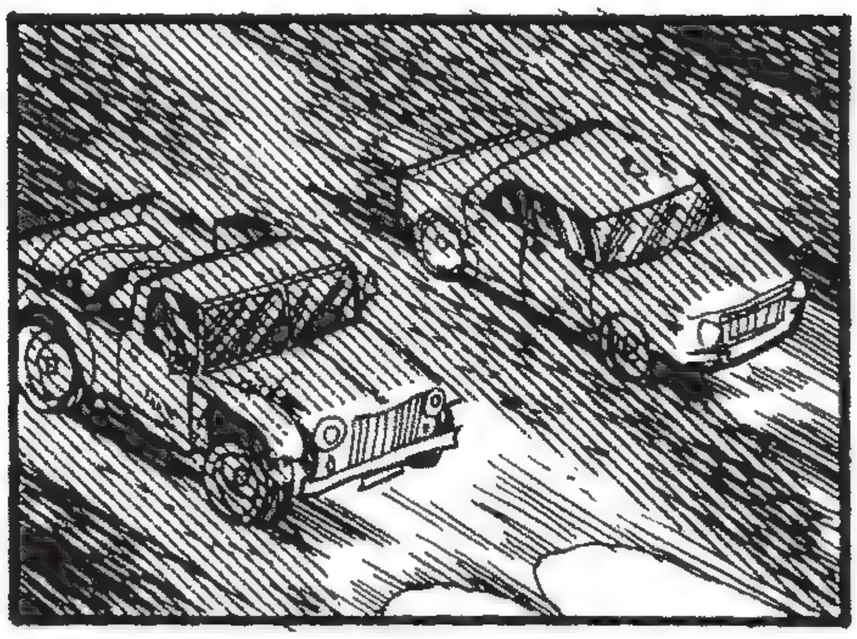
5


HOLD UP, YOU GUYS... I GOT AN IDEA!
HUH?
IT'S EASIER TO FIND AN IMMOBILE OBJECT THAN A MOBILE ONE, RIGHT?
YEAH...
SO?
WELL, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND CASEY'S CHEVY. WHEN CASEY SHOWS UP TO GO HOME --WE'VE GOT HIM!
NOT A BAD IDEA, RAPH... YOU'RE IMPROVING!
BITE ME, LEO!
WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR? LET'S ROCK!
6

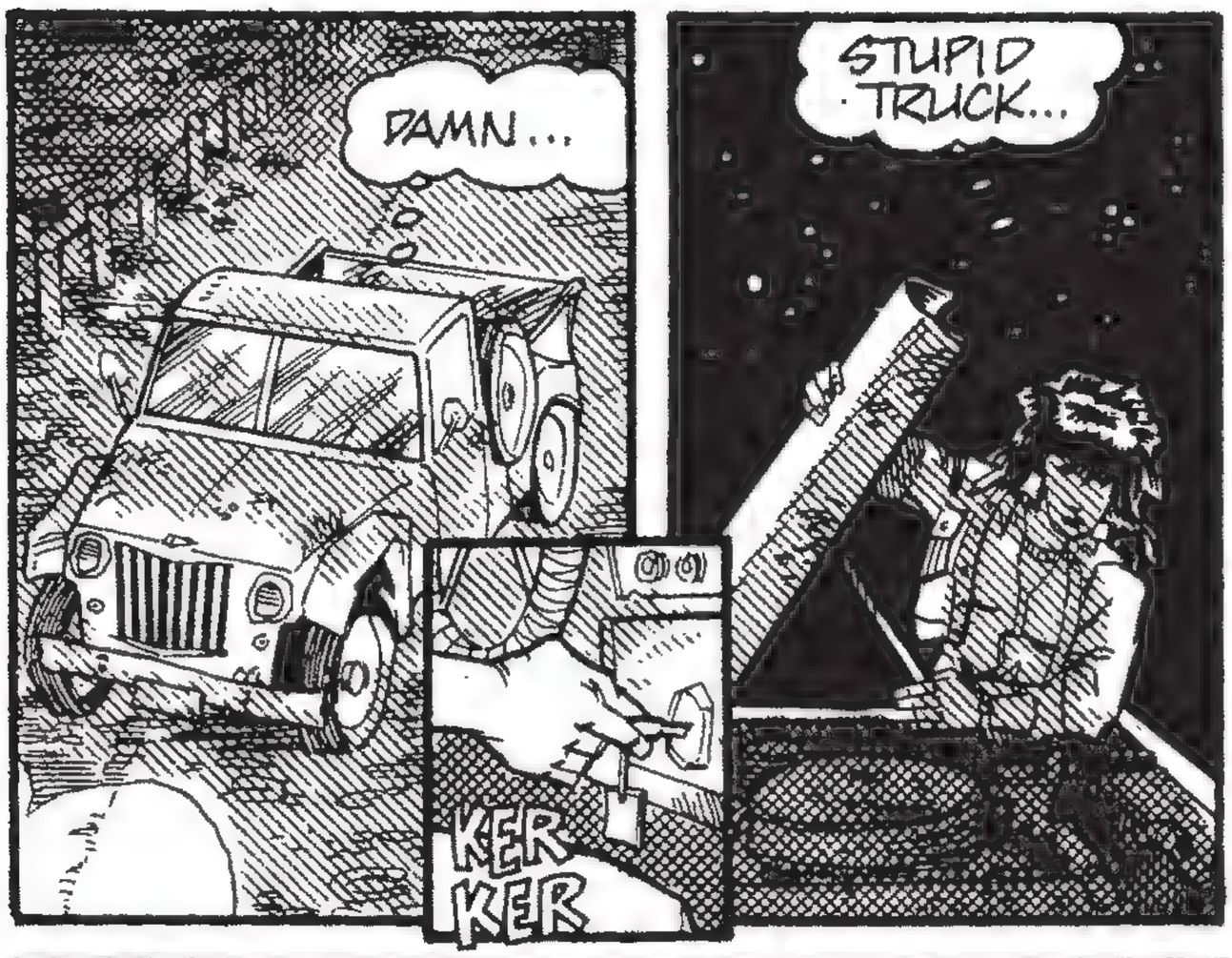

DONUTS
99¢

KER
BRUM

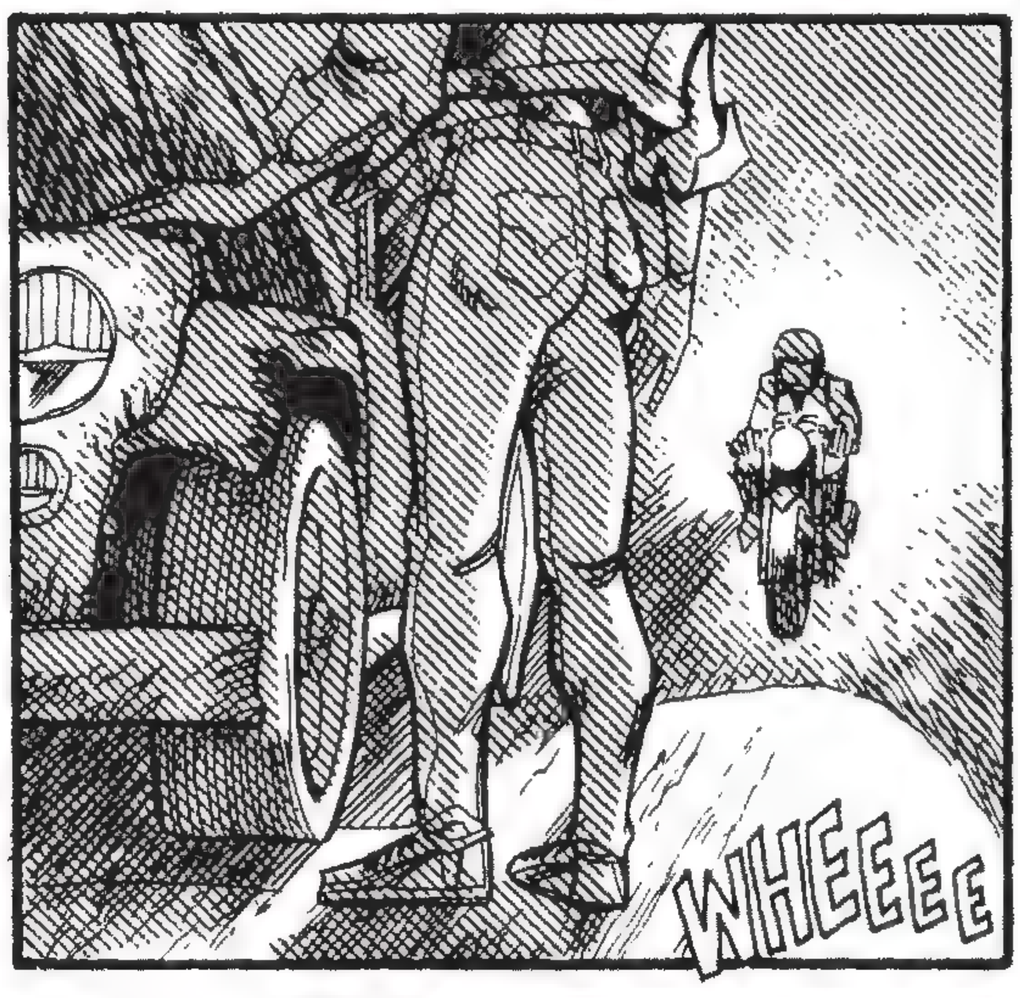
TO
91
NORTH

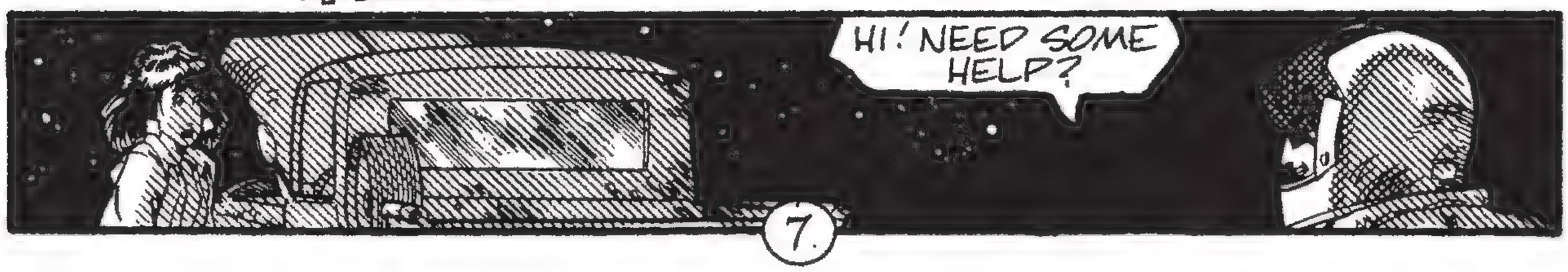


SPUT
SPUT
OH,
NO...


DAMN...
KER
KER

STUPID
TRUCK...


WHEEEEE


HI! NEED SOME
HELP?
7.

CHUCKLEHEADS...

8

HEY...

WHA' WE GOT HEAH...

... FREAKIN' FREDDY KRUGAH?

HEE HEE.

YO, FREDDY... Y' WANTA CROSS OUR TURF...

...Y'GOTTA PAY THE TOLL!!!

OOH... HOMEY WÄNTS TA PLAY!

I GOT YOUR TOLL RIGHT HERE, PALLY.

GET 'IM!

THUD

THUNK

THUP

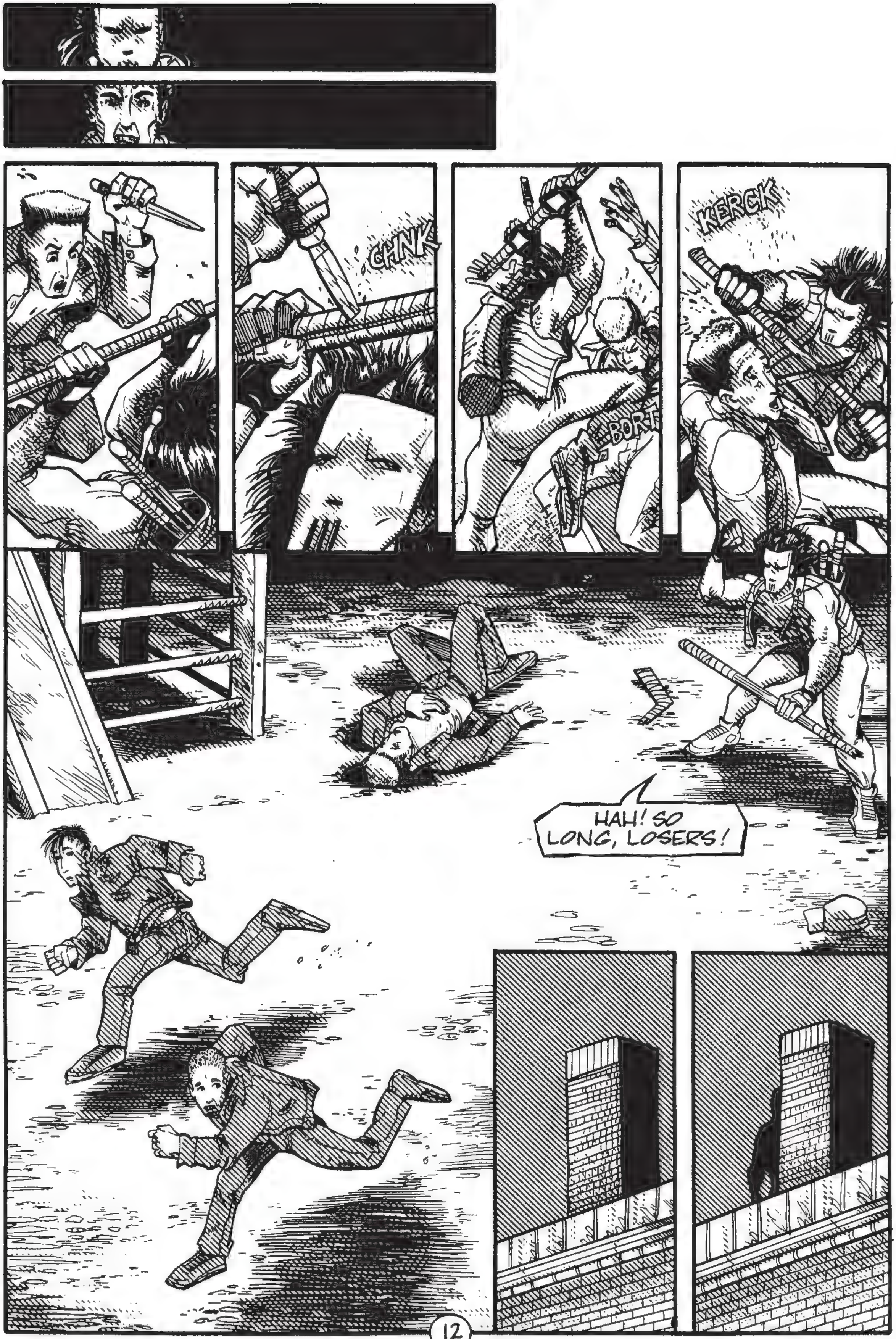
BAP

KERSH

THAK

KRAK

BAPF


CHNK
KERCK
BORT
HAH! SO LONG, LOSERS!
12

GAME OVER, KID...

I THINK I HEAR YOUR MAMA CALLIN'!

HEY, KID-- TIME TO...

KID...?

OH, JESUS...

...HE'S DEAD!

13

OUGU!

THUMP

SMECK

BAP

KREK

GET UP, YOU MURDERING SCUM.

UNH... WAIT...

...YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!

SAVE IT FOR THE COPS, SPITHEAD.

YOU'RE GOING DOWN-TOWN!

NO... DON'T--!

URK

--NO!

BEF

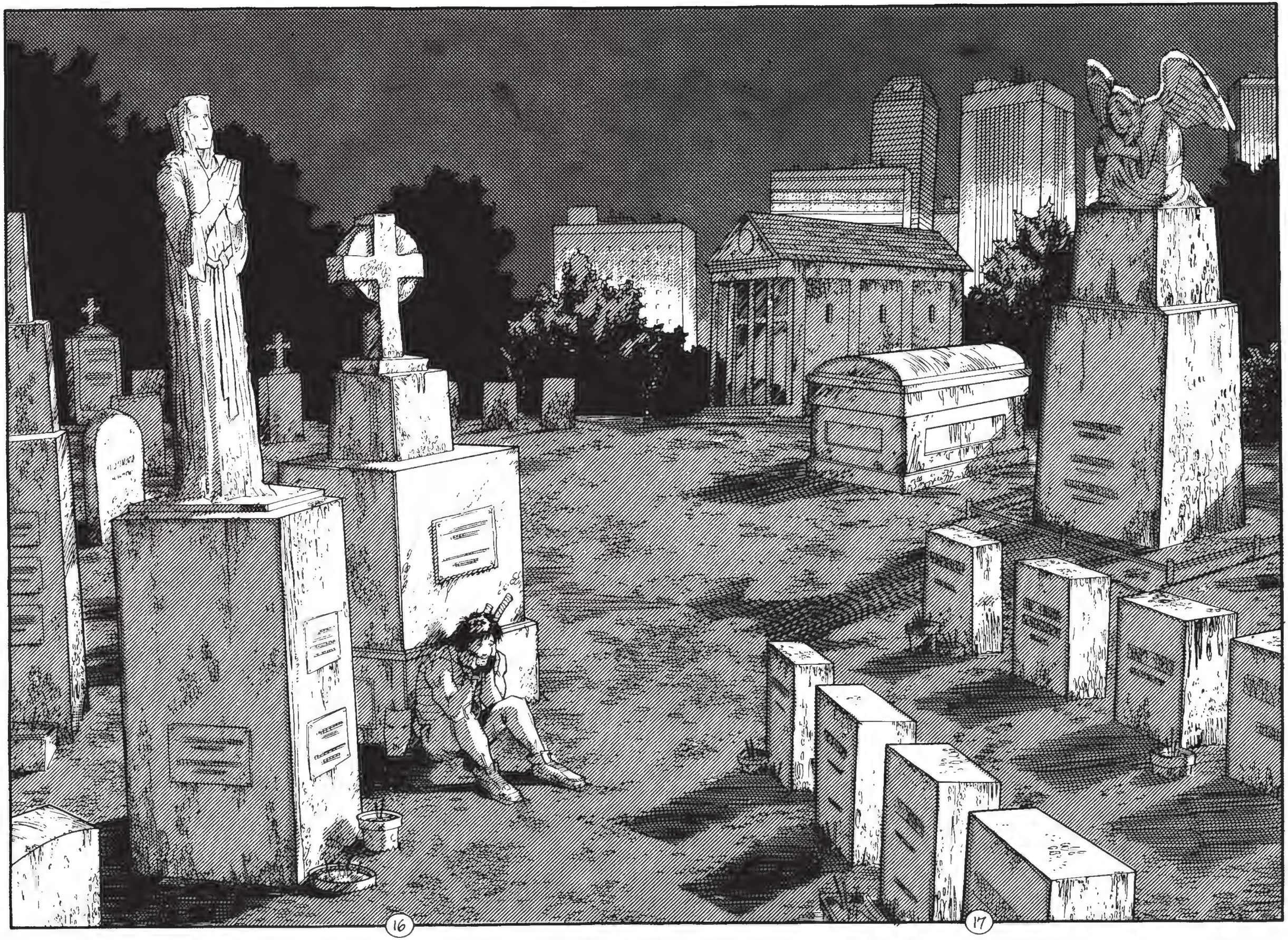
I SAID--

RUNK

URK--!

DAMN! HE GOT AWAY!

15


16
17

I...KILLED HIM...
I KILLED A KID...

JUST A KID...

AND I...
I...

NO!

WAP
WHUK

I...

...KILLED HIM.

END OF THE LINE, PUNK!

YOU--!

10

THOSE TWO KIDS ARE SURE IN A HURRY...

HA! MAYBE THEY RAN INTO CASEY. C'MON, LET'S CIRCLE BACK.

HOLD UP, GUYS...

UH-OH...

IS HE...?

19

YUP...THIS DUDE'S TOAST.

SOMEBODY WASTED HIM, AND IT WAS NOT LONG AGO BY THE LOOKS OF IT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED?

I WISH DON WAS HERE...HE'S GOOD AT THIS STUFF. BUT IT SEEMS LIKE A FIGHT WENT DOWN HERE...

SCUFF MARKS... FOOTPRINTS LEADING OUT OF THE PLAY-GROUND IN TWO DIRECTIONS...

LEO...

THAT'S CASEY'S.

I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING...

LET'S FIND HIM... *QUICK!*

?

BASH!

DAMN CAPE--!

RRIP

KLOK

WHUP

THUK

21

CHOP

SMEX

WHUPP

22

WHORK

WOP

GUYS LIKE YOU MAKE ME SICK-- LIFE MEANS **NOTHING** TO YOU!

NO... NO...

HUH--?! THE **TURTLES**--! ARE YOU GUYS CRAZY?

LET HIM GO, NOBODY.

THIS PUNK'S A STONE KILLER!

23

CASEY'S A LOT OF THINGS...

...BUT HES NO MURDERER.

TELL THAT TO THE DEAD KID BACK AT THE CENTER STREET PLAYGROUND!

CASEY... WHAT HAPPENED?

I...I DON'T KNOW.

THESE THREE KIDS JUMPED ME ...IT GOT OUT OF CONTROL...

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...

I... I...

LEO...WHAT DO WE DO?

WHATTYA MEAN, MIKE? IT'S OBVIOUS -- CASEY'S COMIN' BACK WITH US, AND NO BONEHEAD IN BLACK TIGHTS IS GONNA GET IN THE WAY! RIGHT, LEO?

WELL...

I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M HEARING! WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER BEFORE... YOU PROFESS TO BE ON THE SIDE OF LAW AND ORDER, AND YET YOU CONDONE THIS MAN'S ACTIONS?

HAVEN'T YOU KILLED BEFORE, NOBODY?

ONLY IN SELF-DEFENSE ...AND DAMMIT I'M A **COP**!

YOU GOT A PRETTY FLEXIBLE DEFINITION OF SELF-DEFENSE...

...OR WAS THAT NOT YOU BLOWING A COUPLE OF CHOPPER JOCKEYS INTO FLAMING BITS OVER THE CONNECTICUT RIVER AWHILE BACK?* I DON'T RECALL THAT YOUR LIFE WAS IN DANGER FROM THEM...

SO DON'T GO THROWIN' YOUR BADGE IN MY FACE... WHEN YOU'RE WEARIN' THAT SUIT YOUR BADGE DON'T MEAN **JACK**!

SO... HAND HIM OVER.

NOW!

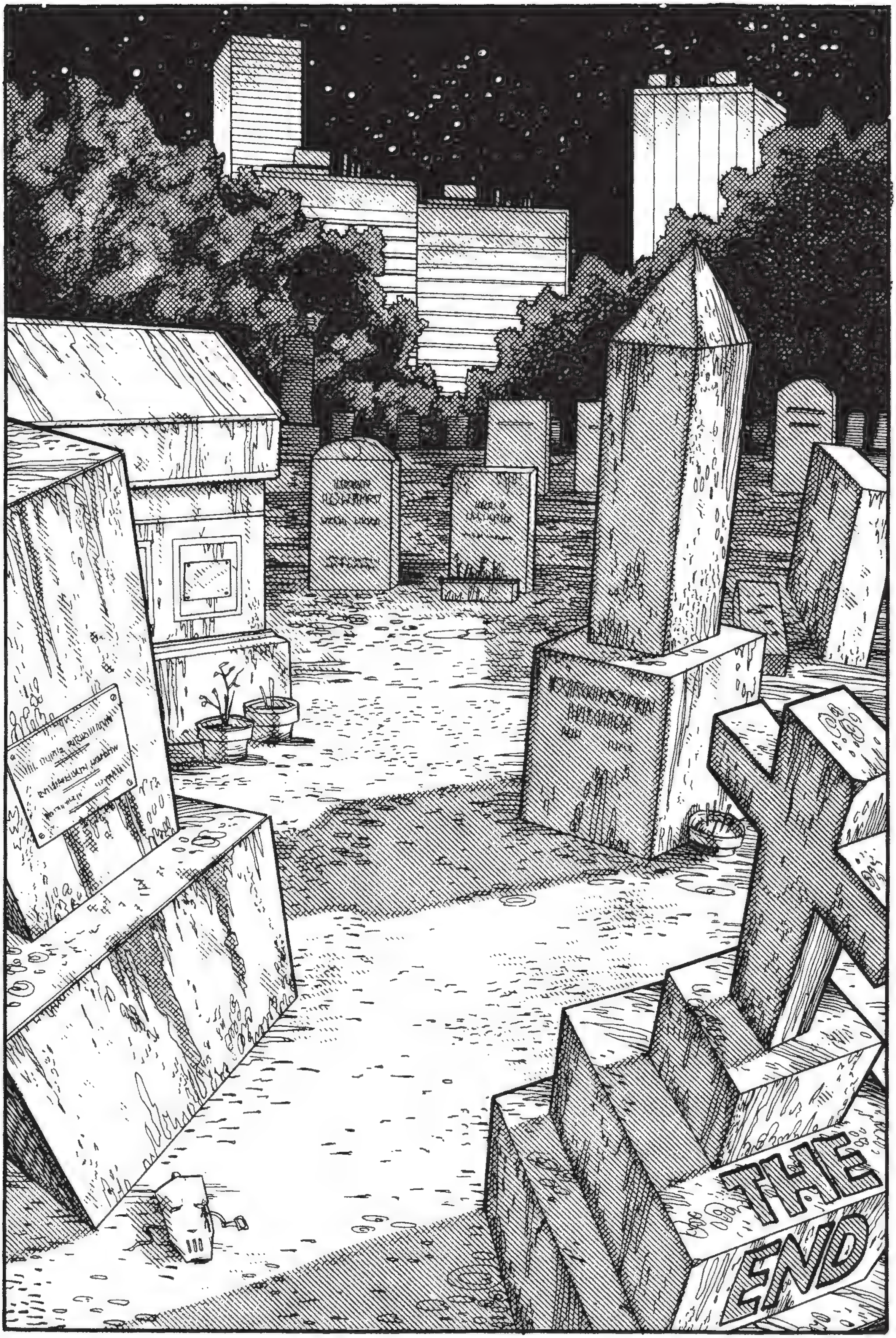
*SEE TALES OF THE T.M.N.T. #2

YOU REALIZE THIS MAKES YOU ACCOMPLICES.

CASEY WILL ANSWER FOR WHATEVER HE IS GUILTY OF. JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED.

YES... I'LL SEE TO THAT.

26


THE END

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

There was a lot going on in 1992, if I recall.

TMNT business was booming. Initial work on the third TMNT film had started, another season of the animated series was underway, as was the next toy line extension work. All this going on right in the middle of managing a new major worldwide licensing program. Meanwhile my new company, Tundra Publishing, was funding projects at an alarming rate, and I was getting ready to open the Words and Pictures Museum of Fine Sequential Art.

Awesome stuff for sure, but most importantly, over at Mirage Publishing, Peter and I had been working for a while to put together a new team, administrative as well as artistic, to try and get back to basics with the core of the company—back to where we started—as self-publishers.

Ever since finishing the "Return to New York" series (*TMNT* #19–21), we thought it would be great to do a storyline about the aftermath of Shredder's (second and final) death—focusing on what would happen to the "Foot" organization. Shredder had built an evil criminal empire, with an army of generals, lieutenants, grunts (as well as scientists and accountants) that ruled the streets of New York, but also reached way back to the original Foot Clan in Japan.

This also felt like the perfect time to shake up what we had been doing with the original group, story wise. Sometimes breaking them all apart and spinning them off to face new challenges, growth spurts, and reflection can re-energize a creative team and, equally important, the fans.

Combining these two elements was the foundation of the 15-issue series. It was back to basics for everyone.

That was the plan. But eight intense years had passed since the launch of book one in 1984; a lot had changed for all of us by the time we got to this point. Let's see how much I remember from 20 years ago… and how much I may have forgotten...

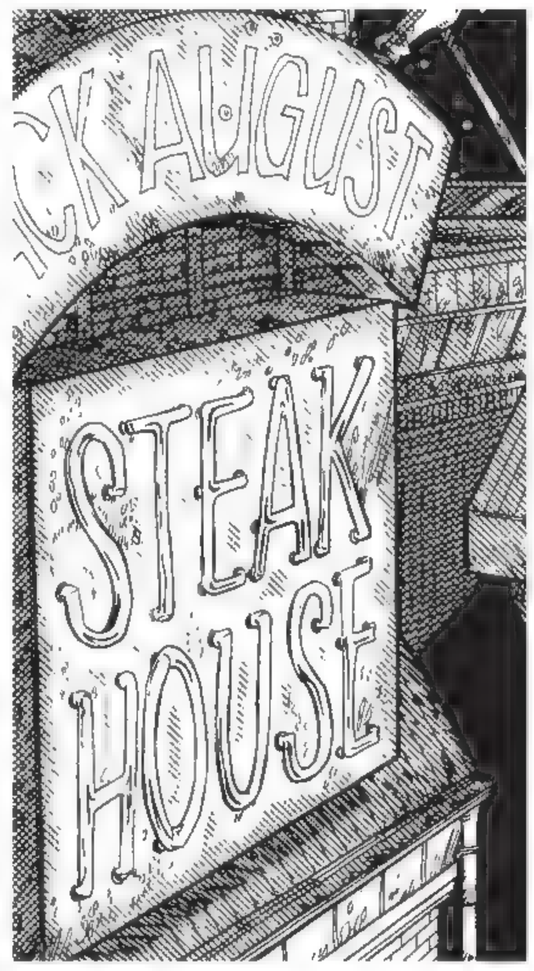
One of the things I know we all wanted the series to have were A.C. Farley covers. I loved all the different in-house talent we had at Mirage Studios in those days—Mike Dooney, Jim Lawson, Eric Talbot, Steve Lavigne, and Ryan Brown—and I loved all their personal visions/styles of drawing the TMNTs, but I do think we all unanimously, and totally, dug Farley's work. He's a top-shelf artist's artist, and a top-shelf person as well.

Pairing Jim Lawson's and Keith Aiken's finely tuned pencils was also a unanimous call by the whole editorial gang (after a number of folks tried out), and Keith continuously knocked it out of the park though most of the entire run. Matt Banning jumped in for one issue, and Jason Temujin Minor came in for two near the end to give Keith's hand a break! Both solid craftsmen.

You'll also notice that although Peter Laird and I share story credit, Peter and Jim Lawson share the script credit. And to fairly give credit where credit is due, Peter and Jim did all the real heavy lifting here. I know Peter and I did a series of excited jam sessions, working out the basic plot points and rough story structure, but I recall pouring over Jim's final pencils before they went off to inks—totally thrilled with what the two of them were doing.

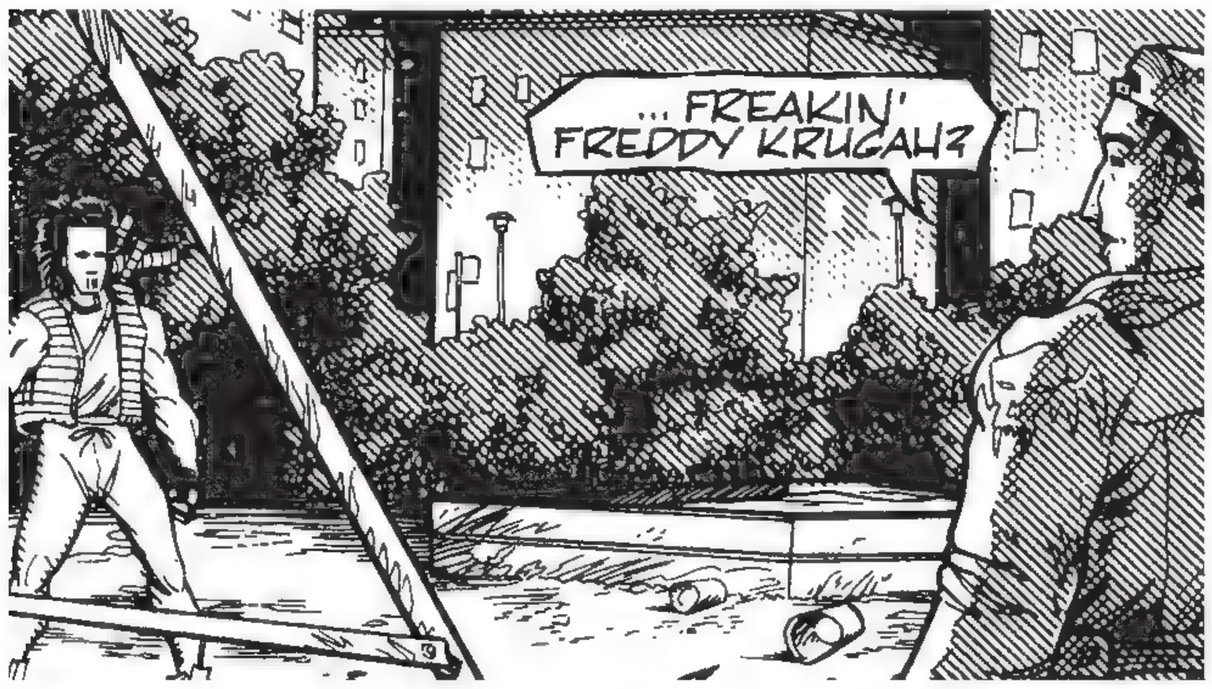
The fun part of starting with this two-part prequel to the upcoming "City at War" event was zeroing in on Casey, and some of the serious issues going on with him. Same with another Mirage Studios favorite but underused character, Nobody. The story is still set in downtown Springfield, Massachusetts for these two issues and introduces some VERY weighty issues for Casey to process. He has a pretty awesome arc to follow through the entire run.

They all do, actually, and it hasn't even started yet.



Page 1: It is funny to see signs like "Jack August Steak House" in the opening splash page with Casey running along the roof-tops, mainly because if you're from the Northampton, Massachusetts, area now, you know that place no longer exists. And if you read it back when it came out, the roof-top area doesn't look anything like that—there's actually a train bridge that runs right along there! Still a cool splash page though!

Page 5: I've mentioned this before, but love how it's stayed as a staple over time. The Jeep April drives in this issue was designed after one my Grandfather had at the lake in Maine where I grew up. I think everyone had a shot at driving around the old dirt roads up there—it had all the dents to prove it.



Page 10: "What we got heah… freakin' Freddy Krugah?" Awesome, spot-on local Mass-hole accent!

Page 18: I don't think we ever really dealt with a death in the entire series like we did here. It went a long way towards helping Casey grow up, and I think it worked as a complete arc by the end… though I'm not going to spoil that for you now.

CITY AT WAR
Issues 50 - 62
A new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series by Eastman and Laird.
Don't miss it!
Available in comic shops this August.

ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

From this issue until issue #61—with the exception of issue #50—Craig Farley did the covers, and they were, typically, beautiful work. This one is no exception.

As explained in the editorial comment from me and Kevin on the inside front cover, this first chapter of the two-part "Shades of Gray" story served to help set up the longer "City at War" arc, which really began in issue #50.

I should note here that although I am credited along with Kevin for "story" and along with Jim Lawson for "writing," I have very few clear memories of working on this issue. In part, I think that comes from the fact that this issue was produced during a period at Mirage when we were trying to be a "real" publisher and had hired people to produce the books for us, delegating responsibilities that previously had been ours. For that and other reasons (mostly having to do with trying to stay on top of the crazy TMNT licensing activities of that time), I don't have the same connection to what we were doing with the comics at that time as in the early days when it was just Kevin and me.

Here we go! After a lot of talk, and a lot of work, here is our first issue in the new continuous adventures of the TMNT! The plot for this two-part story (and prequel to issue 50) was hammered out when a bunch of us studio guys got together to talk about a new direction for the Turtles.

Ever since we completed "Return to New York" (issues 19-21) we have intended to deal with the aftermath of the Shredder's demise in a much longer series. With the fiftieth issue on the horizon, we decided that the time was right to finally commit ourselves to doing it! We've dubbed the new series "City at War". As we began working on it, the storyline became a means for us to bring the Turtles and this book "back to basics". Since the City at War storyline will span 13 issues, we decided to ease back into the continuity first with this two part story which gave us the opportunity for some foreshadowing.

We should mention at this point also that while we will be writing and drawing issue 50 completely on our own, the art team of Lawson and Aiken will provide all the art on the series (issues 51 through 62) and Craig Farley will provide all the covers!

Everything is set, let's do it!

P.S. We'll announce the results of our Anthology title contest in issue #49!

Page 1: Great establishing shot (by Jim Lawson) of Casey Jones leaping around on the rooftops of Springfield, Massachusetts. Except that when I see the "Jack August Steak House" sign in the lower left, I think of Northampton. That's because for years one of the landmark restaurants in town was "Jack August Seafood," a place we passed by virtually every day on the way to the Mirage offices. Actually, I can't recall ever eating there. It eventually closed, then turned into a sports bar, which we went to often (I remember their cheddar chicken breast sandwich with much fondness), and is currently a fancy restaurant.

This issue has Keith Aiken inking Jim's pencils. I can't recall how Keith got this job, but he did it well.

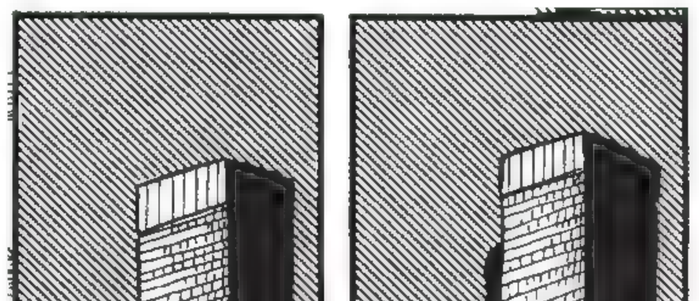
Pages 2–4: These three pages set up the action in this issue—or really, what seems like it will be the action (a training exercise of some sort with Casey being the object of a "hide and seek" game)—but also includes a little foreshadowing of what is to come for the whole group. Specifically, though it isn't really explicitly noted, April is looking through the classified ads, apparently for another place to live. The domestic harmony of the Turtles, Splinter, April, and Casey is starting to show signs of fraying.

Page 7: I can't remember if it was my idea or Jim's to include a scene with a motorcycle—possibly it was both of us—but this seemingly random, go-nowhere scene actually has repercussions in the following issue.

Pages 8–9: I love the panel at the bottom with the gargoyles, but the following panel on the next page makes me wonder if Casey is actually a superhero. A normal human leaping that distance would surely break an ankle or a leg! Dramatic, though.

Pages 10-13: Excellent fight choreography from Jim, leading to the unexpected death of one of the punks. But looking at this again, I think it would have helped to show some kind of hit from Casey that would have looked more like a killing blow. As it is, I'm trying to figure out exactly what he did that killed the kid.

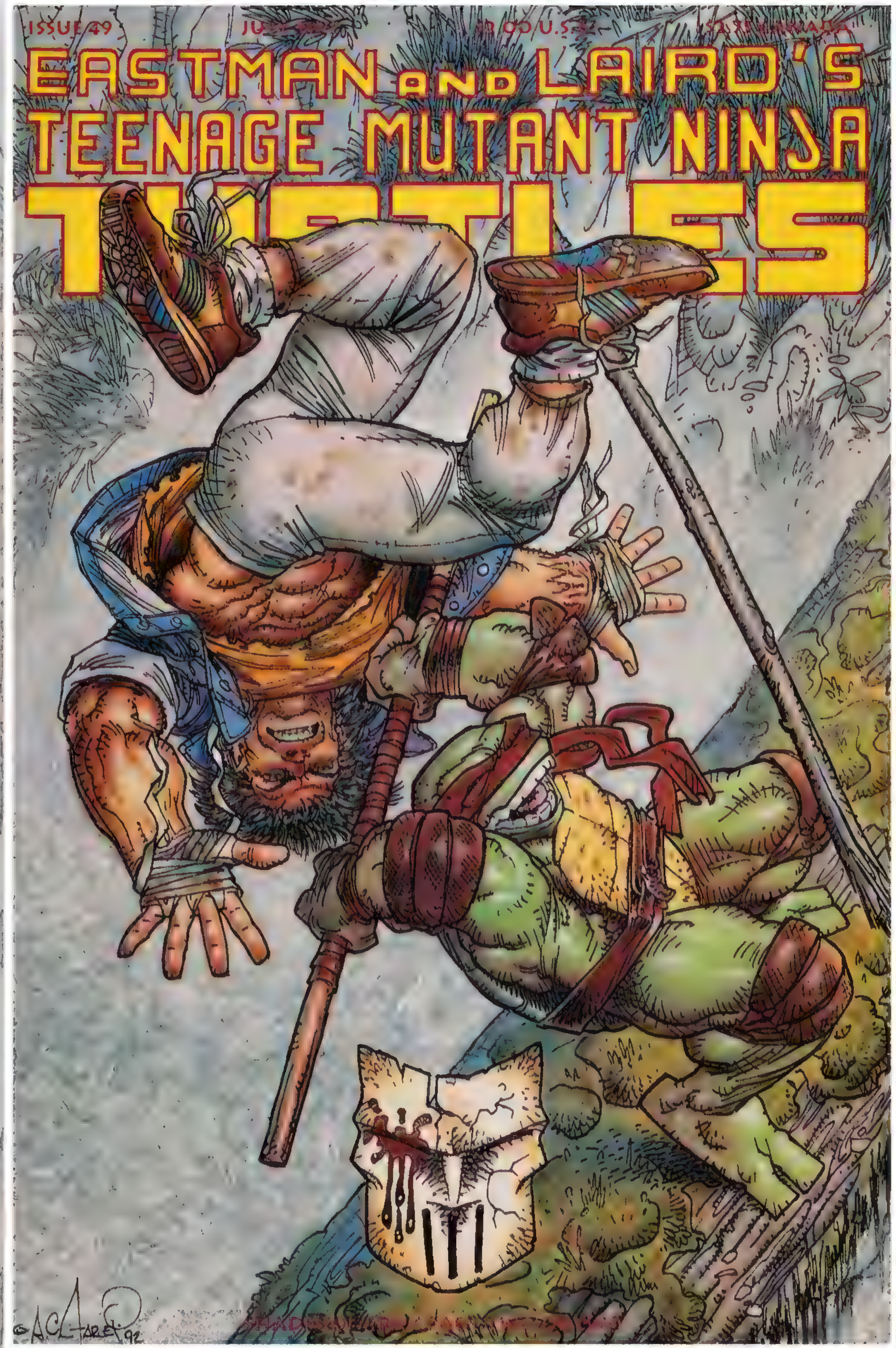
I like the little panels on pages 12–13, which foreshadow, literally, the appearance of Nobody, the masked vigilante.



Page 15: More nice fight choreography, and I like the little detail Jim put in with Nobody's cape getting caught in the swingset chain.

Pages 16–17: Beautiful, moody, wordless cemetery scene… and I just noticed that the handcuff Nobody slapped on Casey a couple of pages earlier has, in this scene, jumped from his left wrist to his right. Oops!

Page 25: Probably my favorite bit in this issue occurs in the last two panels, when Raphael calls Nobody on his hypocrisy.



#49

SHADES OF GRAY PART TWO

OKAY, SO YOU MET THIS GUY... UH-HUH... MOTORCYCLE, HUH? AND YOU LIKE HIM?

YEAH... YEAH. UH-HUH.

WELL,.. I DON'T GET IT, APRIL.

HUH? I MEAN, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

HUH? YOUR SITUATION...WHAT ABOUT YOUR SITUATION?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU CAN'T BRING THIS GUY HOME? HUH? YOUR HOUSEMATES... OH, I SEE.

SO GO TO HIS HOUSE!

HMM?

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, SIS...WHY YOU WON'T LET ANYBODY GET CLOSE TO YOU.

...ESPECIALLY THESE LAST FEW YEARS.

SCRITCH SCRITCH

PURRR

HUH? WELL, I HARDLY HEAR FROM YOU ANY MORE... NO...NO, I'M ***NOT*** GOING TO GET ON YOUR CASE --MELLOW OUT! GEEZ...TOUCHY!

IT'S JUST THAT I WORRY ABOUT YOU, APRIL... YOU'RE THE ONLY SISTER I'VE GOT, YA KNOW.

HMM? YEAH, ME TOO.

LOOK, HERE'S THE PLAN... GO TO HIS PLACE, MAKE HIM A NICE DINNER... HUH? OH, THAT PORK CHOP AND RICE THING. HMM? VEGETARIAN? GAWD, HE SHOULD BE LIVING OUT HERE! SPEAKING OF WHICH...

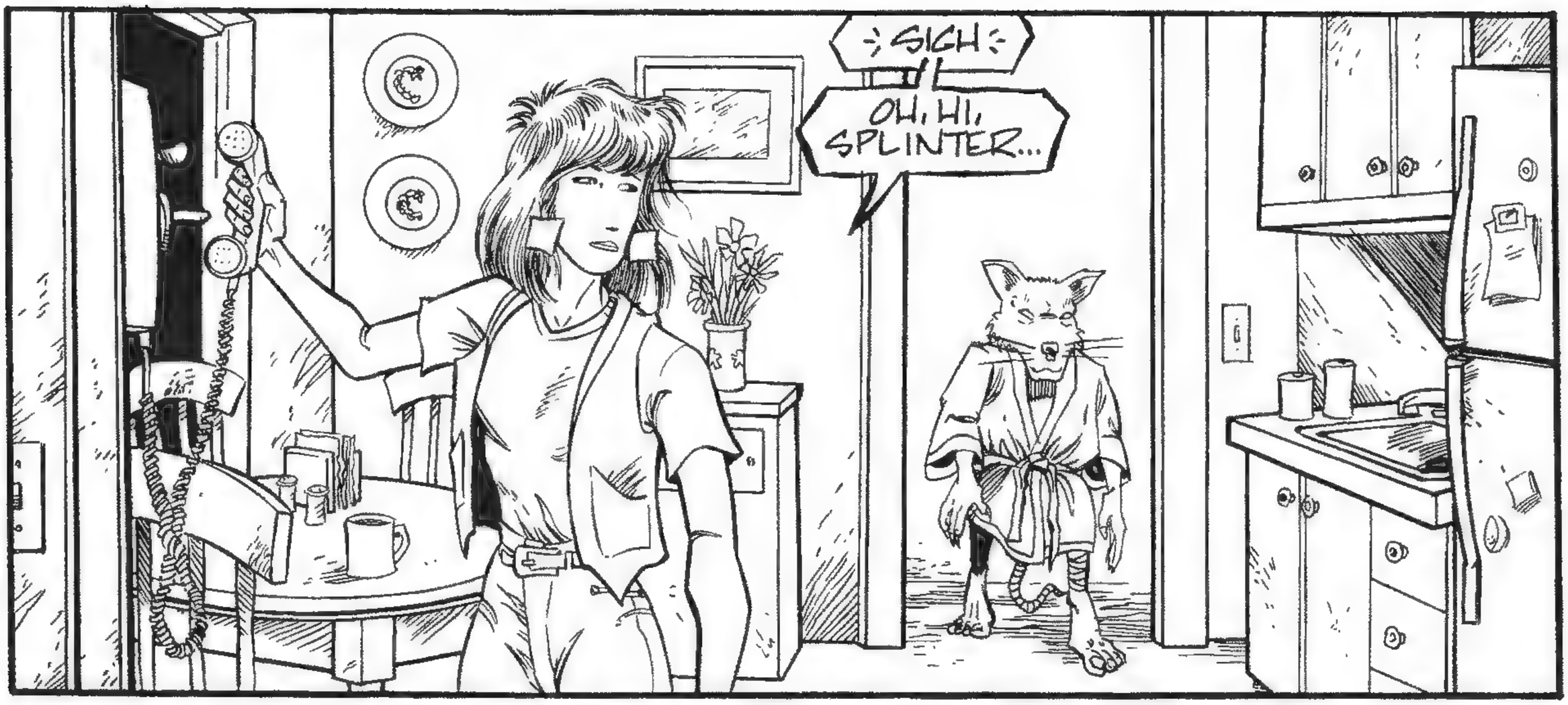
...ANY CHANCE WE'LL EVER SEE YOU ON THE WEST COAST? YEAH? I THINK YOU'D LIKE IT. UH HUH...

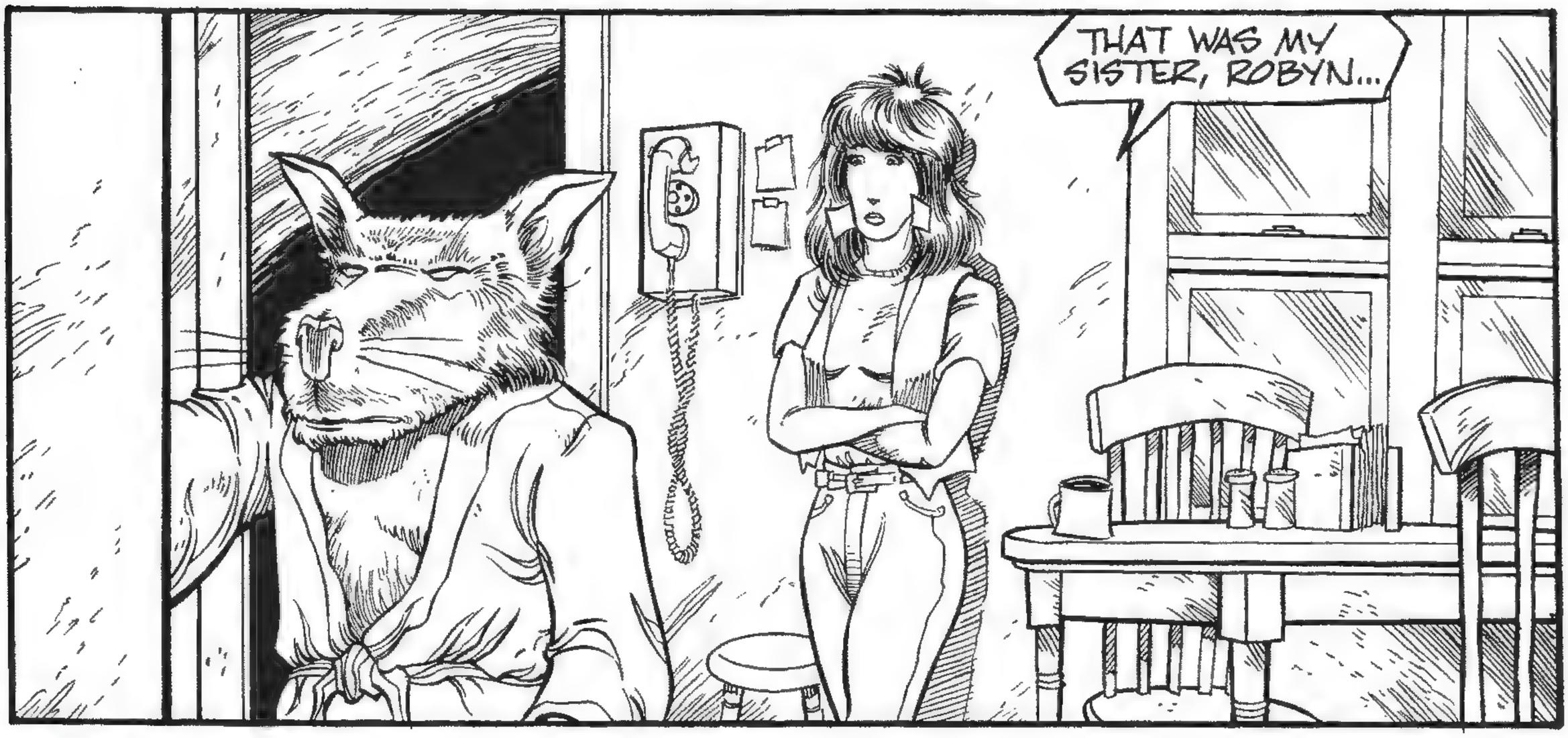
HEY... I GOTTA GO... I THINK I HEAR TREVOR WAKING UP FROM HIS NAP...

CALL ME AND LET ME KNOW HOW THINGS WORK OUT, OKAY? YEAH... OKAY, THANKS FOR CALLING ...OKAY, TALK TO YOU LATER. OKAY, 'BYE!

CLICK

3





UH, I WAS TELLING HER ABOUT THE GUY WHO HELPED ME GET THE TRUCK STARTED LAST WEEK. HE'D LIKE TO SEE ME AGAIN... BUT I'M AFRAID--

I FEEL LIKE...EVER SINCE I MET YOU AND THE TURTLES AND... CASEY... MY LIFE HAS BEEN SO SECRETIVE AND STRANGE. I MEAN...

HOW CAN I GET TO KNOW THIS GUY--OR **ANY** GUY--IF I CAN'T LET HIM GET TO KNOW ME? 'CAUSE GETTING TO KNOW ME MEANS LEARNING ABOUT YOU GUYS...AND THAT... GEEZ!

SOMETIMES I JUST WISH I HAD A NORMAL LIFE.

SPLINTER... WHAT SHOULD I DO?

LEAVE.

SLAM

UGH-GUH...

HEHN...?

OHH, MAN...

GUZZI LEMANS

...MOUTH TASTES LIKE SOMETHIN' CRAWLED IN THERE AND DIED...

OH, NO--

HAUKALP!!

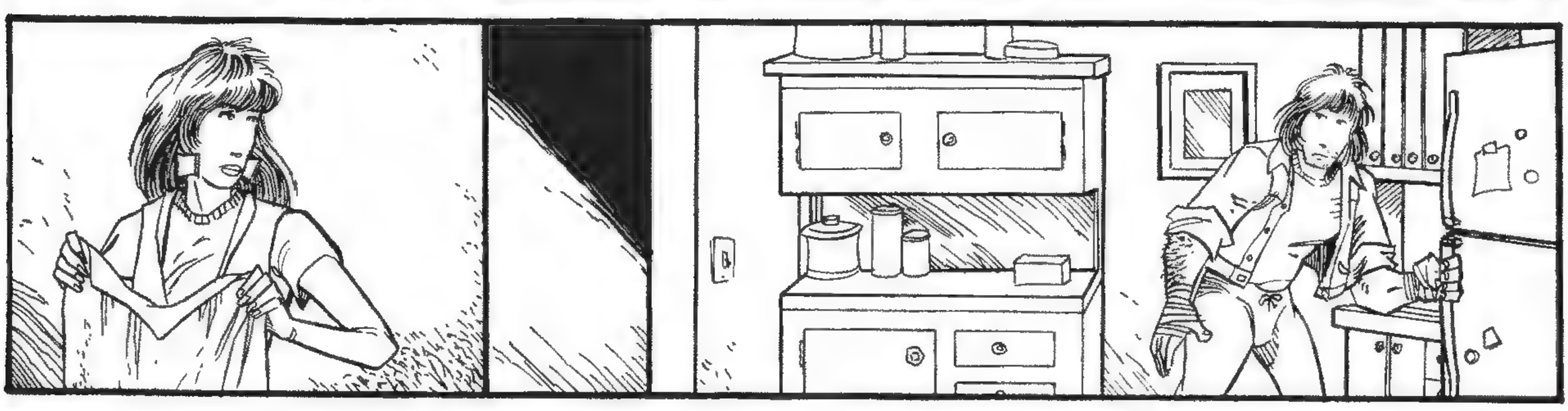
CASEY...?

CASEY--? YOU OKAY IN THERE?

UGH... GO... AWAY!

YEAH. SEEMS TO BE A THEME TODAY.

FLUSH



"IF ONLY THAT KID HADN'T BEEN THERE..."

"IF ONLY I'D GONE A DIFFERENT WAY..."

UNGH...

GRALLPH!

"IF ONLY..."

IF ONLY...

CONFUSION...

HUH?

DISORDER...

...CHAOS
10
11

WHA'... WHAT'RE YA DOIN'?

HMM?

OH, HI, CASEY! I'M JUST OBSERVING THE STREAM...

AH... IT'S ALL PART OF MY ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THE FRACTAL STRUCTURE OF NATURAL PATTERNS...

HUH?

YOU SEE, IN SOMETHING AS APPARENTLY RANDOM AS THE RIPPLES IN THIS STREAM THERE ARE PATTERNS THAT REPEAT, FORMING LARGER PATTERNS.

IT'S CALLED CHAOS THEORY; M.I.T. DID A STUDY LAST YEAR AND--

WHY THE HELL DO YOU TALK LIKE THAT?

WHAT?

LIKE IT HURTS YOU TO USE WORDS SHORTER THAN YOUR NAME... LIKE YOU'RE BETTER THAN EV'RYBODY!

12

FOR ALL THE TIME WE'VE SPENT TOGETHER, I DON'T KNOW YOU... AN' WHY IS THAT?

WELL, WE DON'T EXACTLY SHARE A LOT OF INTERESTS...

HOW TH' HELL D'YOU KNOW WHAT I'M INNERESTED IN?

YOU CAN'T BE BOTHERED...YOU JUS' DO YOUR OWN THING AN' EVERYBODY ELSE CAN JUST GO--

CASEY... CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS LATER... LIKE WHEN YOU'RE SOBER?

NO! RIGHT NOW! IT'S JUST YOU AN' ME, DONNIE-BOY ...YOU CAN'T IGNORE ME NOW!

13

HEY, LOOK-- I REALIZE THAT YOU'RE UPSET OVER THE DEATH OF THAT KID...

...BUT YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING. GO HOME... SLEEP IT OFF.

SHUT UP!!

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF JUDGING ME?!

CASEY, YOU'RE STARTING TO GET ON MY NERVES, MORE THAN USUAL...

...I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE.

OH YEAH? WHO'S GONNA MAKE ME... YOU?

OOH, LOOKIT-- I'M SHAKIN'!

YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO TAKE ME ON, CASEY...

SO DON'T PUSH IT. GO HOME!

ONLY WAY I'M GOIN'...

...IS THROUGH YOU!

SNAP

C'MON, DONNIE...

LET'S SEE...

POKE

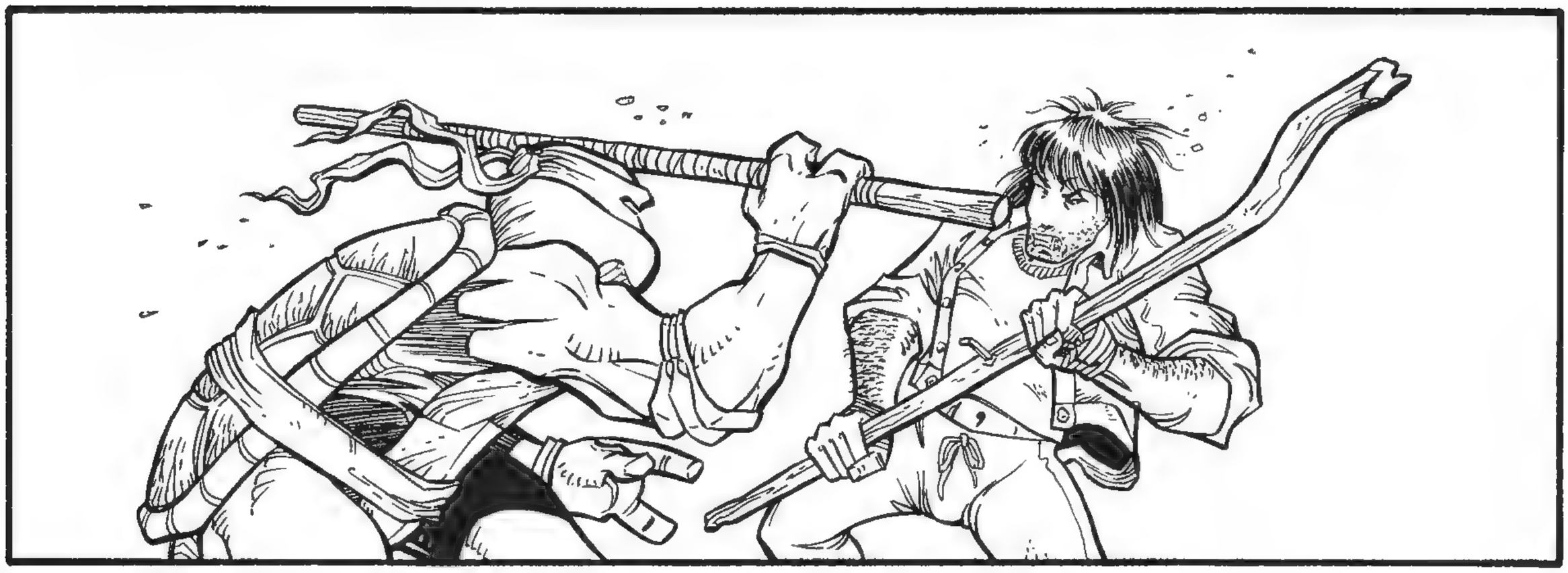
...WHATCHA...

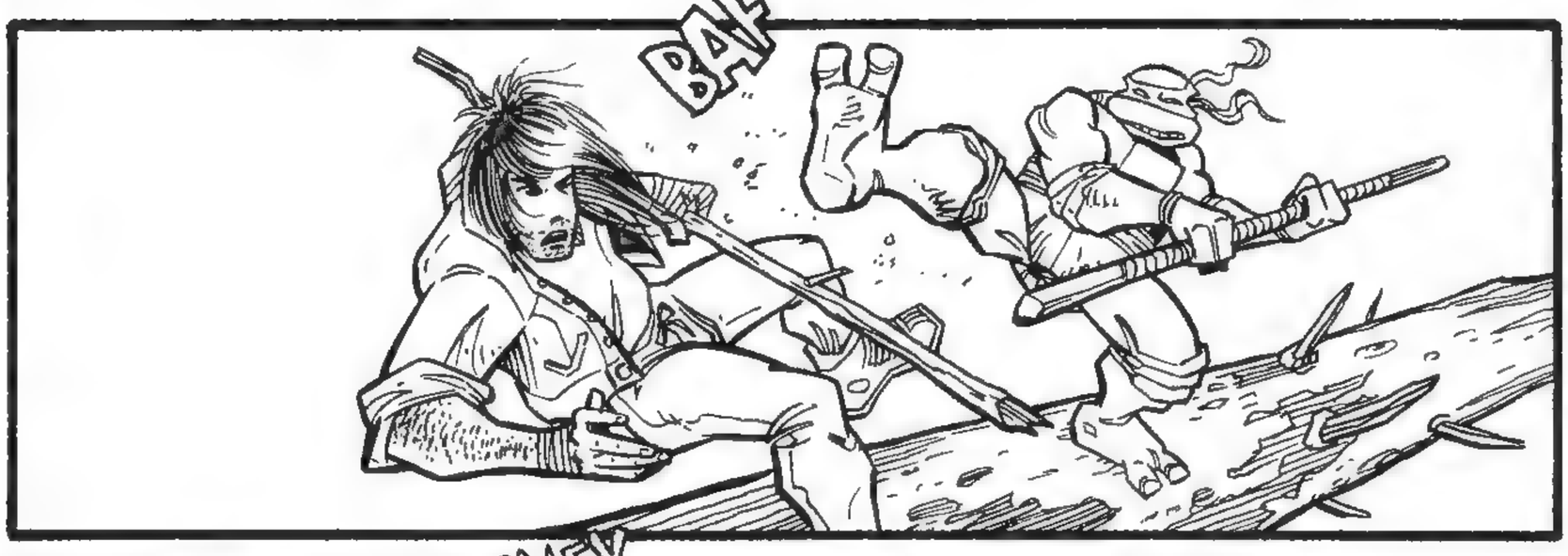
POKE

...GOT!

DONK

URRR...





16

CHAKK

BAF

KREK

17

NEED A HAND, RAPH?

I'LL GIVE YOU A HAND, YOU DUNGBALL!

C'MON...LET'S GO AGAIN!

HAI!

--SENATE COMMITTEE RELEASED ITS FINDINGS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION'S ALLEGED COVER-UP OF--

--HOUSE SPOKESMAN MARLIN FITZWATER DESCRIBED THE ALLEGATIONS--

--MORE RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT FROM THE SOVIET UNION--

BAF

--SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR--

WHUP

HE GOT YA, RAPH--TWO OUT OF THREE FALLS!

HRMM... SHEER LUCK!

--GANG-RELATED SLAYINGS CONTINUE WITH FOUR VICTIMS IN THE LATEST INCIDENT IN WHAT IS BEING CALLED A MAJOR POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN WARRING ASIAN GANG FACTIONS--

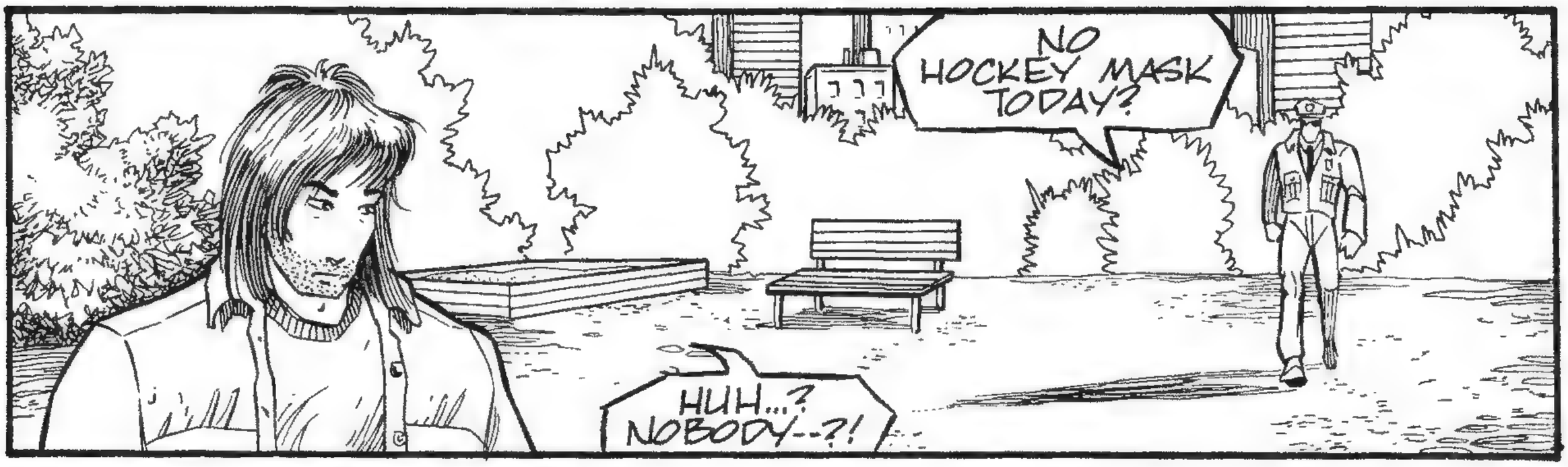
--POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED--

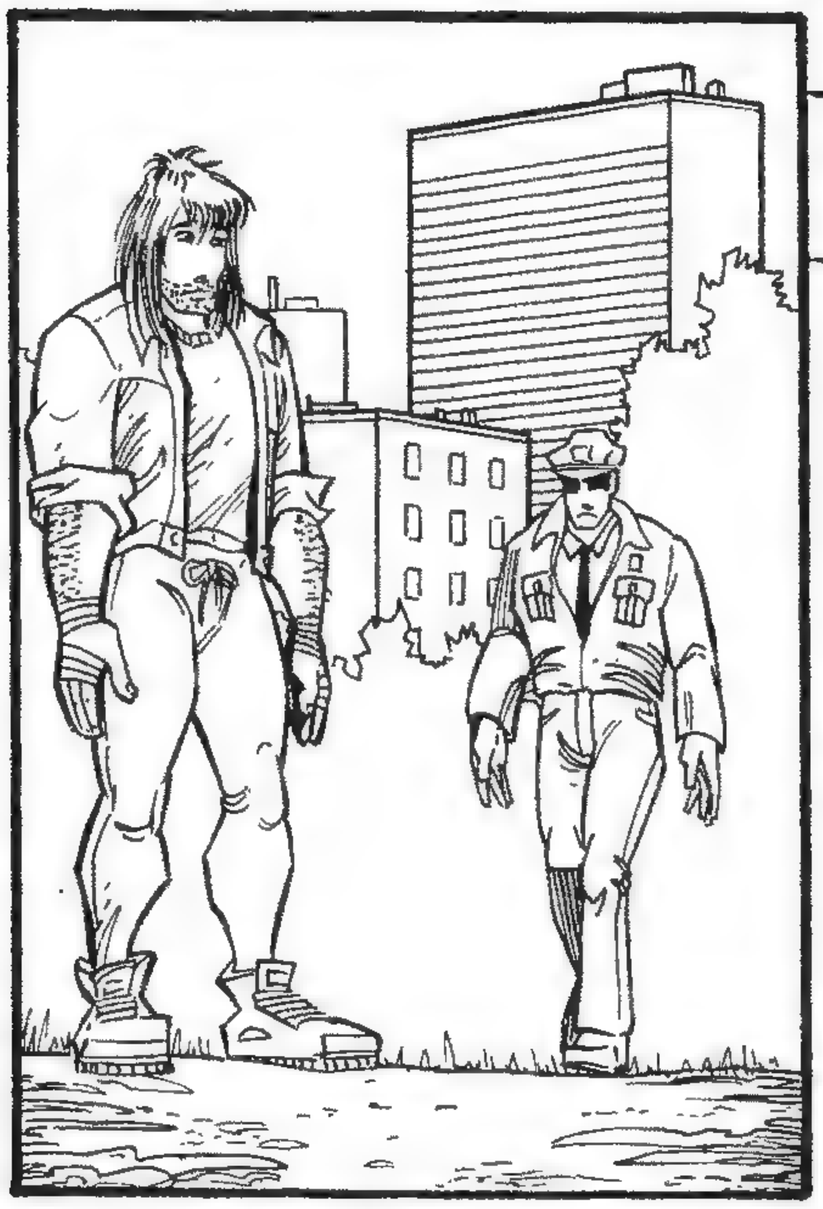
CLICK

RAPH...?

"...IF ONLY..."

20


NO HOCKEY MASK TODAY?
HUH...? NOBODY--?!


YES... THIS IS MY DAY JOB.

STILL THINKING ABOUT THAT KID, HUH?

HIS FRIENDS TURNED THEMSELVES IN... THEIR ACCOUNTS OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT MATCHED YOURS.

IT SEEMS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES... YOU ACTED IN SELF-DEFENSE.
21

YOU SOUND DISAPPOINTED.

DO I? WELL... I DO PREFER AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE, AND YOU SEEM TO BE GUILTY AS HELL.

BUT... FACTS ARE FACTS. AS MUCH AS I LIVE TO BRING CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE, I HAVE TO FACE THOSE FACTS.

BESIDES...

...THE COURTS ARE FULL OF POOR JERKS LIKE YOU, INGESTED AND SPAT BACK OUT, GUILTY OR INNOCENT, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

WOW... AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT BITTER.

22

SOMETIMES... IT SEEMS LIKE SOCIETY IS RETURNING TO THE DAYS WHEN MEN WOULD OPENLY AND SAVAGELY BATTLE FOR DOMINANCE.

EVER HEAR OF YIN AND YANG?

YEAH, THE BALANCE IN ALL THINGS... I HEAR ABOUT IT THE TIME, IN FACT.

THE WAY I SEE IT, THE FARTHER MANKIND PROGRESSES, THE FARTHER IT REGRESSES.

YIN AND YANG... CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER.

BUT I HAVE TO WONDER: IS THERE A LIMIT--A POINT AT WHICH THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY TEARS?

23

I DON'T KNOW...

HMMM... YOU KNOW, THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOUR FRIENDS, THOSE... TURTLES...

I THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE A SIGN... A SIGN THAT THE END WAS NEAR... YOU KNOW, THE BEASTS RISING UP, THAT SORT OF THING.

UH... YEAH.

LOOK... I GOTTA GO...

I WON'T STOP YOU.

24

THE END

ANNOTATIONS

EASTMAN

One of my favorite things about doing these annotations is when I start going through a stack of the old issues, looking at the publisher's notes, the ads and letters pages for each—it really does take a person back to another place and time. For me, there are a few thousand other memory splinters that fly off in all directions. Some GREAT, some not so great—but all there just the same.

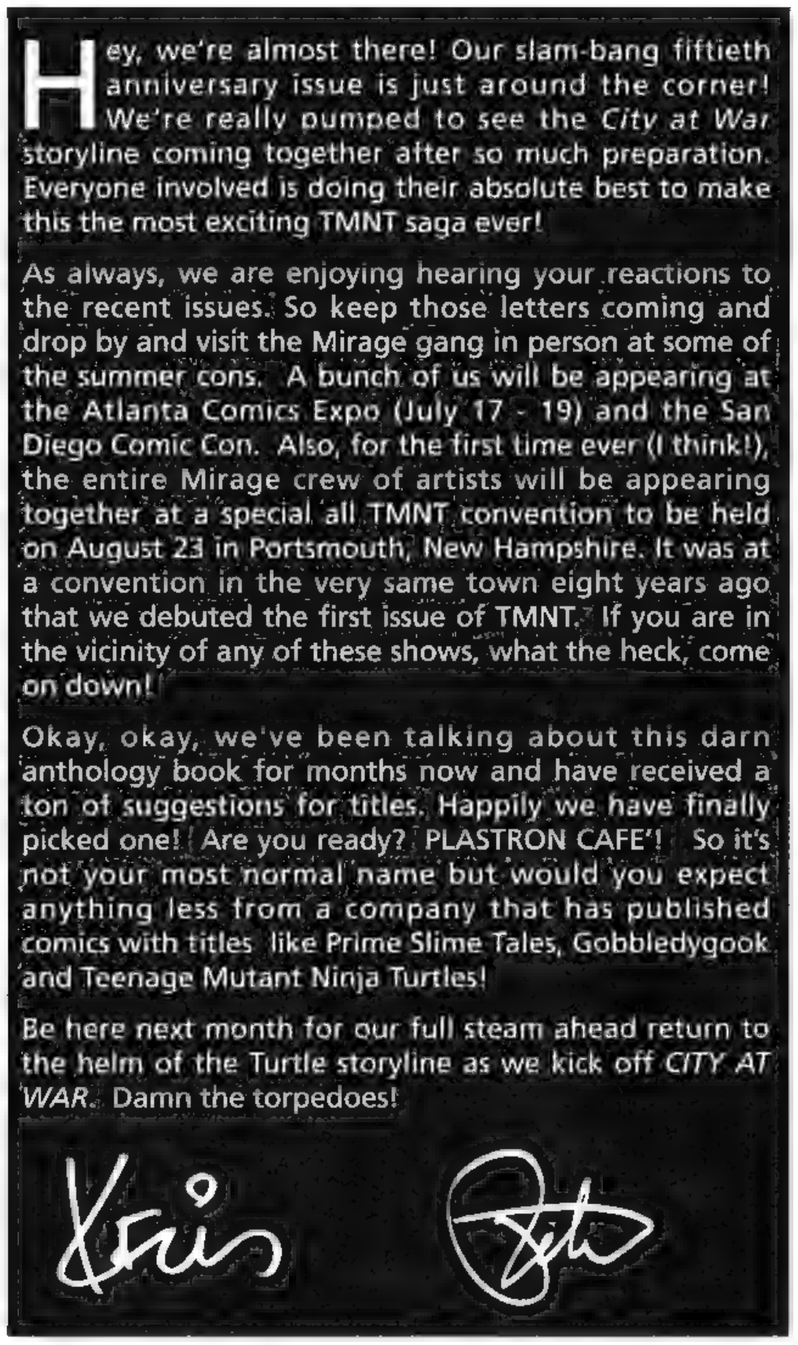
The layout and the pacing for these two issues, as well as the 12 that follow issue #50, are beautifully crafted by Jim off a pretty strong series of scripts by him and Pete. I loved the fact we always had the internal freedom to adjust and play with the speed of the story, expanding and contracting to allow for some very cool single- and two-page spreads.

Pretty great to be the creators and publishers—takes out the middle man…

KEVIN

Page 1: I'm not 100% sure, and don't have all the issues nearby to review, but I think April's sister was one of the new character additions. And it's funny we put her in California—some foreshadowing there huh, kids?—but I'd guess it had a little to do with how much we were dealing with Hollywood around this time. By 1992, Peter wasn't getting on planes anymore, so I'm pretty sure I was doing all the left coast trips. Back then I didn't mind it. The Turtles were serious business in the early '90s, and we worked long hours to control our creations at that time.

OKAY, SO YOU MET THIS GUY... UH-HUH... MOTORCYCLE, HUH? AND YOU LIKE HIM?
YEAH... YEAH. UH-HUH.
WELL... I DON'T GET IT, APRIL.
HUH? I MEAN, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

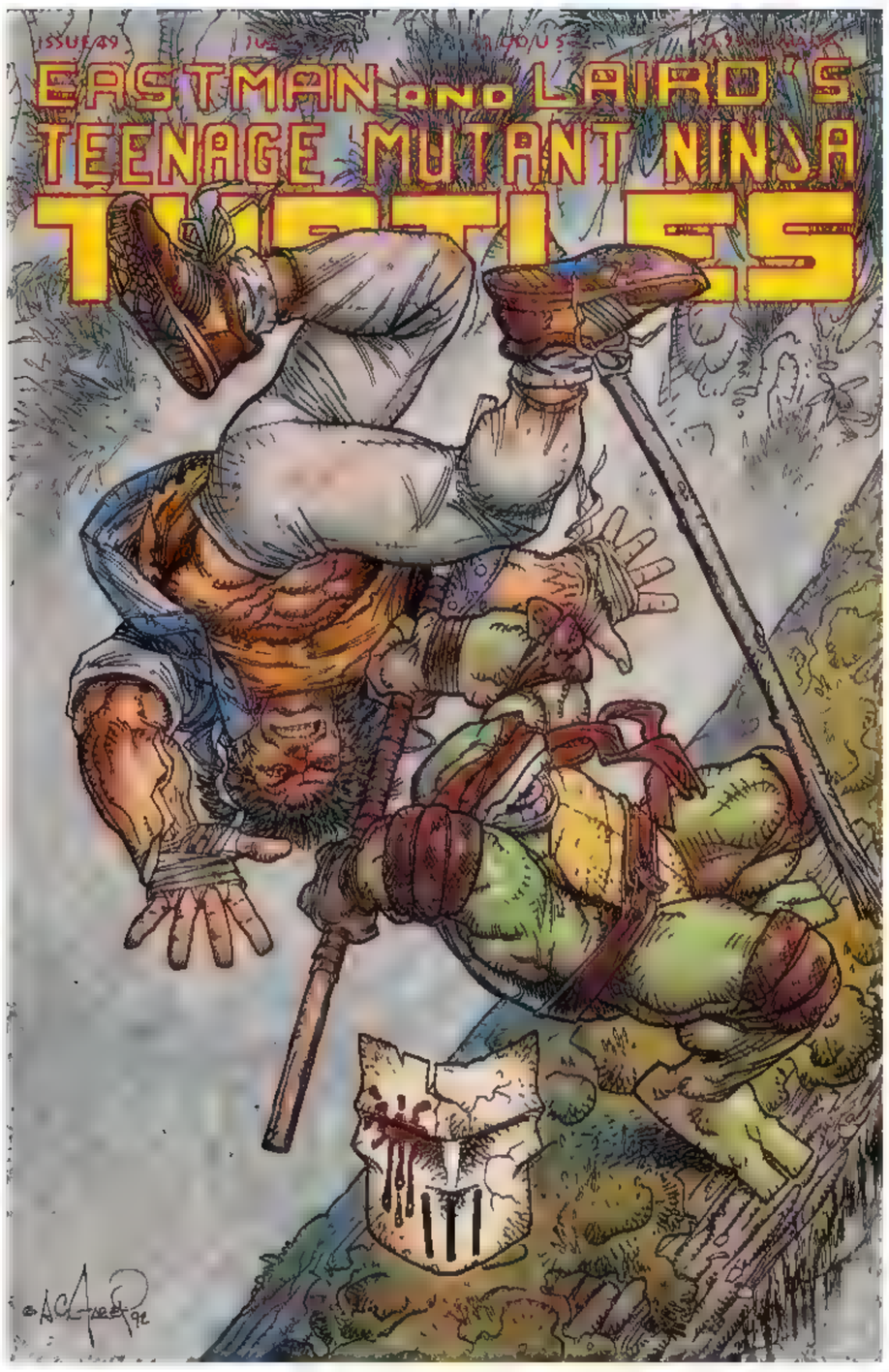

Hey, we're almost there! Our slam-bang fiftieth anniversary issue is just around the corner! We're really pumped to see the *City at War* storyline coming together after so much preparation. Everyone involved is doing their absolute best to make this the most exciting TMNT saga ever!
As always, we are enjoying hearing your reactions to the recent issues. So keep those letters coming and drop by and visit the Mirage gang in person at some of the summer cons. A bunch of us will be appearing at the Atlanta Comics Expo (July 17 - 19) and the San Diego Comic Con. Also, for the first time ever (I think!), the entire Mirage crew of artists will be appearing together at a special all TMNT convention to be held on August 23 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It was at a convention in the very same town eight years ago that we debuted the first issue of TMNT. If you are in the vicinity of any of these shows, what the heck, come on down!
Okay, okay, we've been talking about this darn anthology book for months now and have received a ton of suggestions for titles. Happily we have finally picked one! Are you ready? PLASTRON CAFE'! So it's not your most normal name but would you expect anything less from a company that has published comics with titles like Prime Slime Tales, Gobbledygook and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles!
Be here next month for our full steam ahead return to the helm of the Turtle storyline as we kick off *CITY AT WAR*. Damn the torpedoes!

Pages 4–5: I think one of my favorite personal/emotional beats here is when April complains about how the TMNTs have complicated her life so much since meeting them, and that she sometimes wishes she had a normal life. Then she asks Splinter's advice, to which he simply answers, "Leave."

Between this, Casey's heavy drinking over the accidental death of a thug he was fighting, then the heated verbal exchange and staff battle with Donatello over the river… "Shades of Gray" indeed.

Page 25: Love the final, full-page shot of Casey. Cool and powerful stuff.

ANNOTATIONS

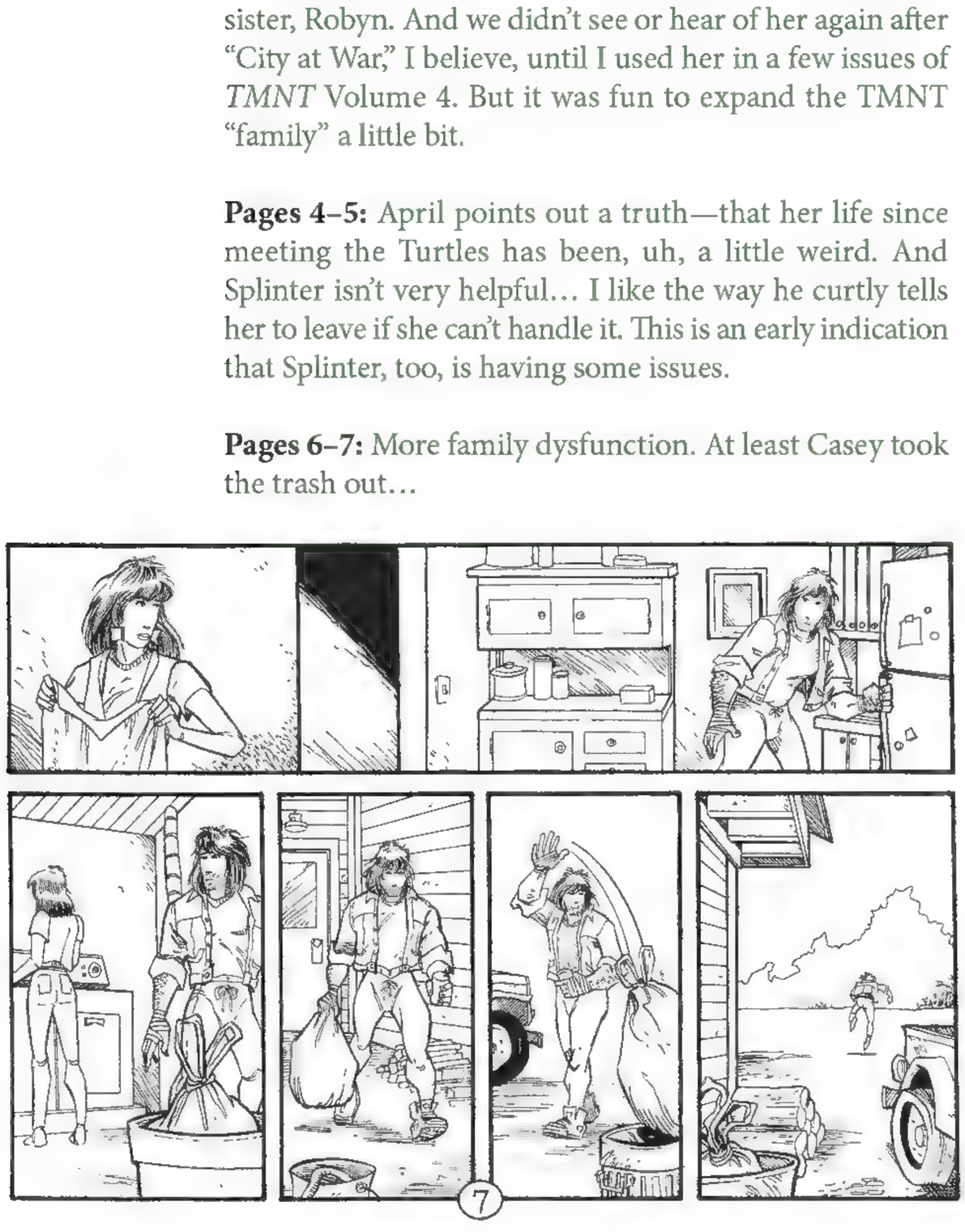


This issue sports one of my favorite Craig Farley covers—I love the composition, the details, the colors.

Pages 1–3: The opening of this book introduces a character we'd never seen (or mentioned before)—April's sister, Robyn. And we didn't see or hear of her again after "City at War," I believe, until I used her in a few issues of *TMNT* Volume 4. But it was fun to expand the TMNT "family" a little bit.

Pages 4–5: April points out a truth—that her life since meeting the Turtles has been, uh, a little weird. And Splinter isn't very helpful… I like the way he curtly tells her to leave if she can't handle it. This is an early indication that Splinter, too, is having some issues.

Pages 6–7: More family dysfunction. At least Casey took the trash out…



Page 9: Here begins one of my favorite scenes, the interaction between a meditative Donatello and a distraught, hungover Casey. We never did too much with these two characters together, probably because they were pretty much polar opposites. But I like this scene a lot… and Jim drew it so well.

Pages 10–11: Jim has a knack for drawing everything, but he does nature especially well. And this shot of Donatello perched on a fallen tree over a river, contemplating the chaotic patterns in the ripples in the water, is beautiful.

Page 13: This page has one of the most brilliant layouts I've ever seen for a single page in a comic book. It's surreal, but it reads perfectly.

Pages 14–17: I love the "slow burn" Donatello does as Casey gets more and more annoying. And yet even though Don is aggravated, he doesn't want to hurt Casey, and is satisfied with toppling him off the tree into the stream. (Yeah, that's definitely a nod to one of the classic scenes in the "Robin Hood" tales.)

Page 18: There's a nice echo of Casey's pose from the last panel of the previous page in the first panel of this page. And as I look at this sequence, I get a little chill as I remember a similar scene with Leo and Raph sparring in the first issue of the "Return to New York" three-parter.

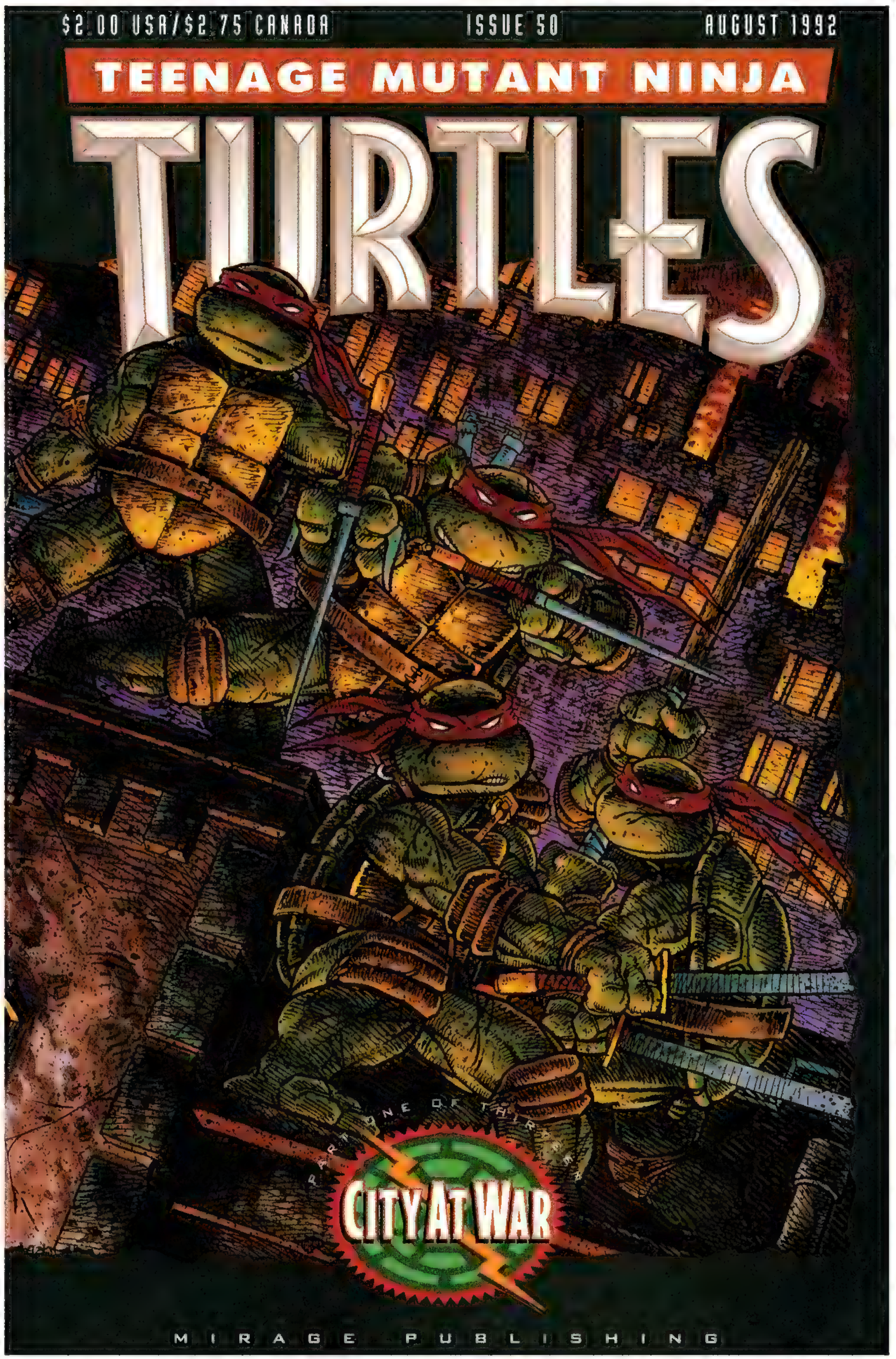
Page 19: Here we see the first overt mention of the events in New York which will will erupt into a larger conflict between the factions of the Foot, left leaderless by the Shredder's final demise.

Pages 20–25: The issue wraps up with an interesting scene with Casey and Nobody (in his guise as a policeman). I like the bit where Nobody asks Casey if he's ever heard of the concept of Yin and Yang, and Casey replies "Yeah… I hear about it all the time, in fact." It's a small thing, but nice for what it suggests.

This scene is also interesting for the glimpse it offers into the personality of Nobody, who appears here to have a very curious take on things. I wish we'd done more to explore that in later issues.

PIN-UP ART BY ERIC TALBOT.

TAKEN FROM AN UNPUBLISHED STORY BY KEVIN EASTMAN AND ERIC TALBOT.


$2.00 USA/$2.75 CANADA
ISSUE 50
AUGUST 1992
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
PART ONE OF THREE
CITY AT WAR
MIRAGE PUBLISHING

#50

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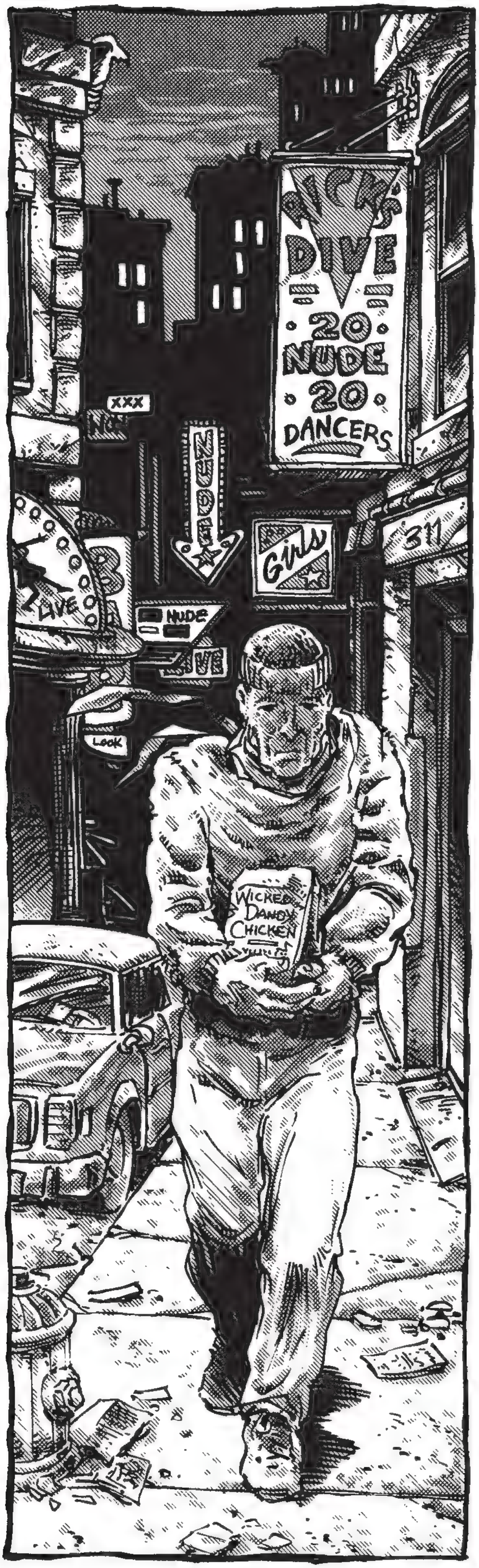
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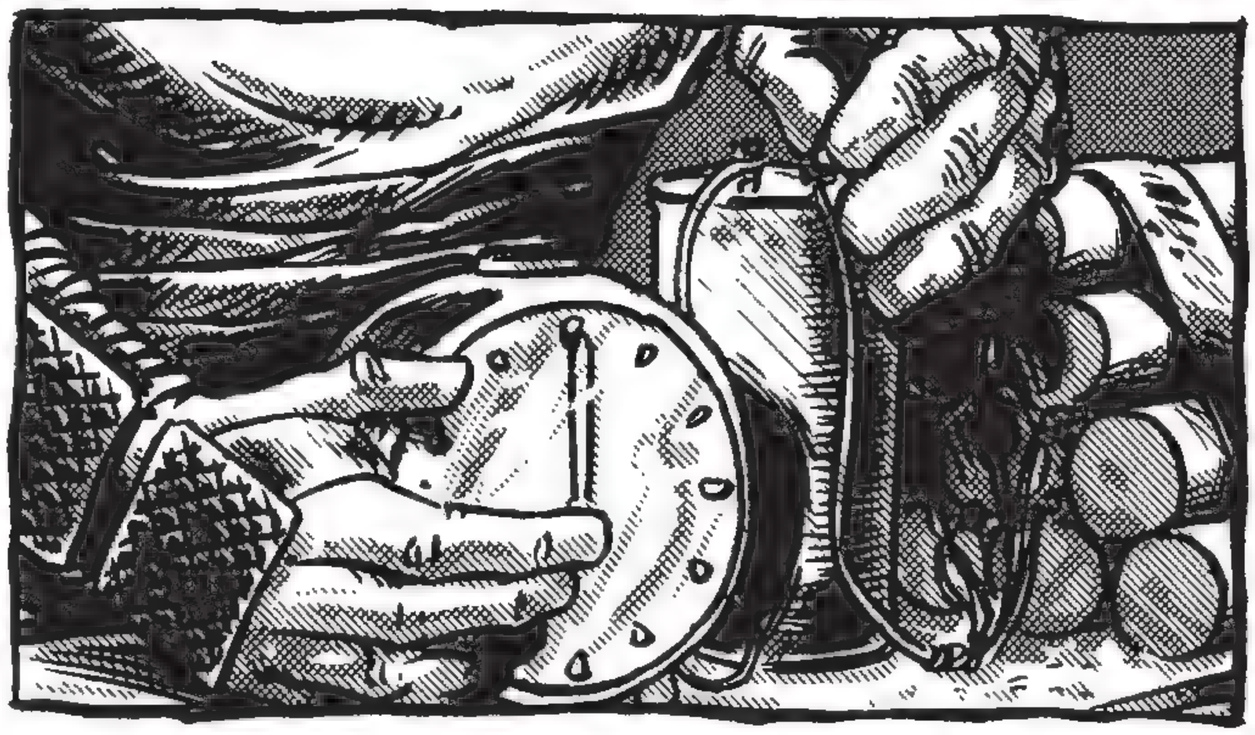

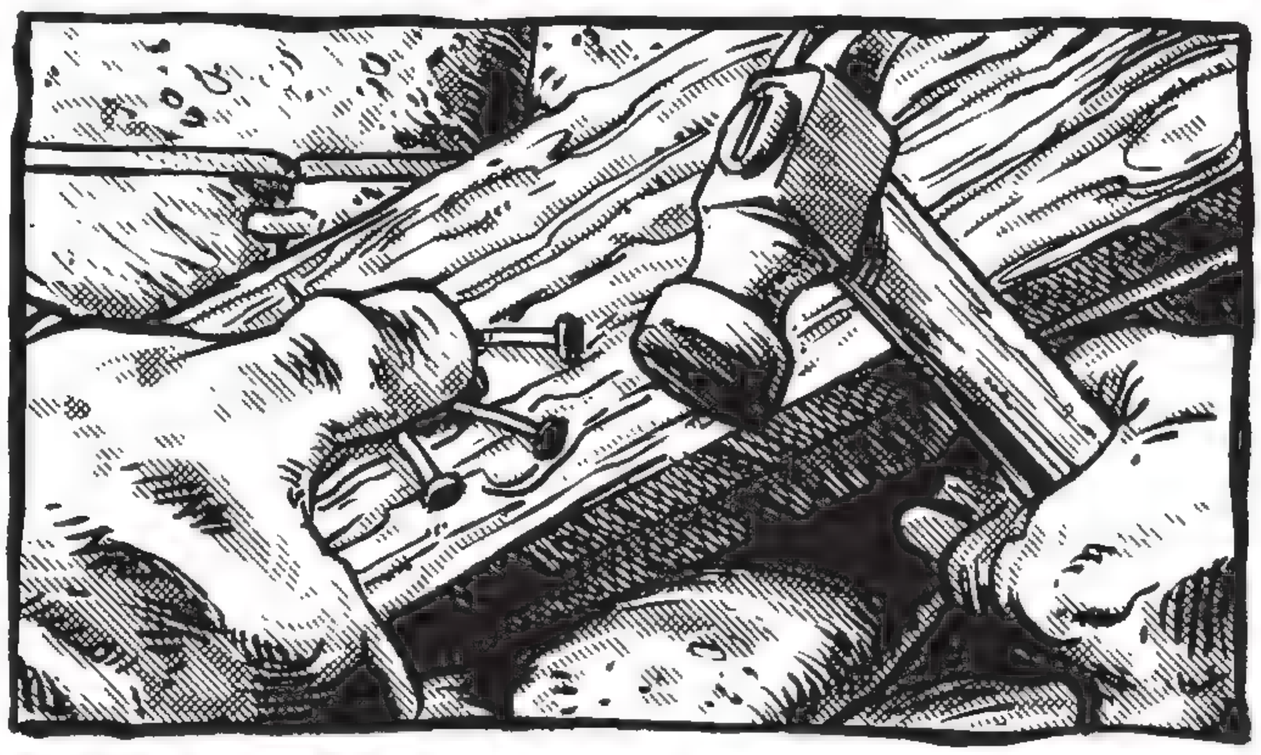

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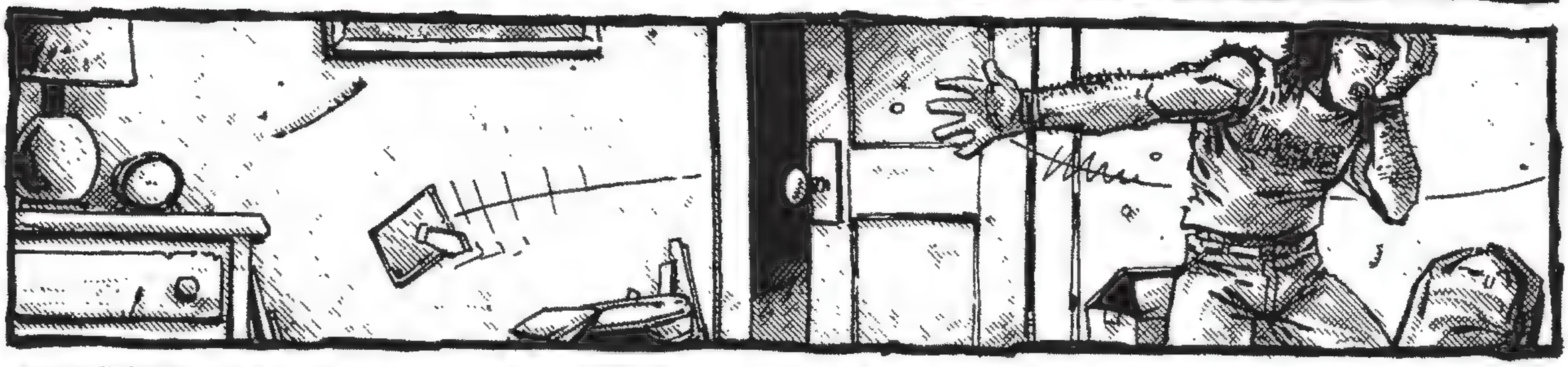
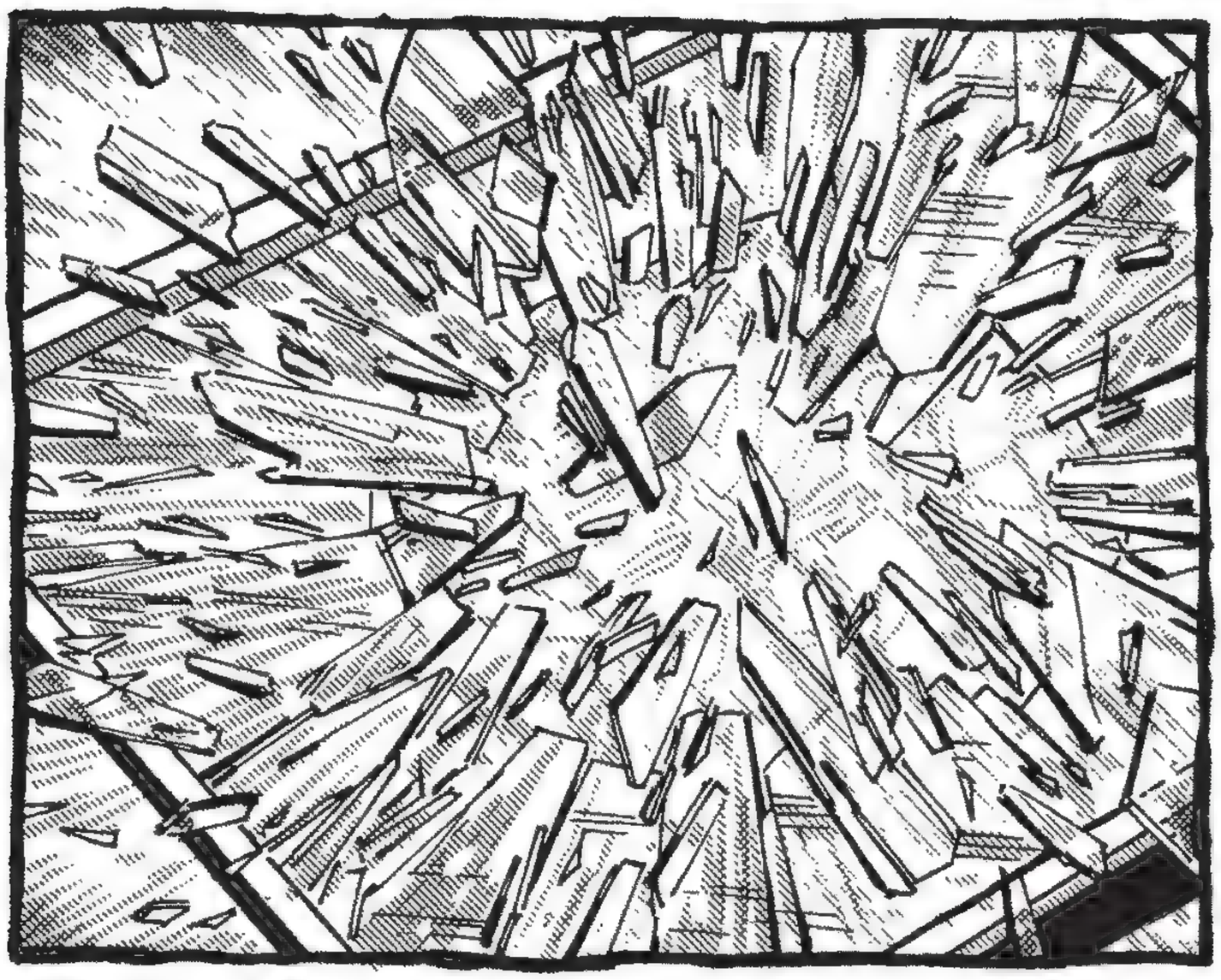
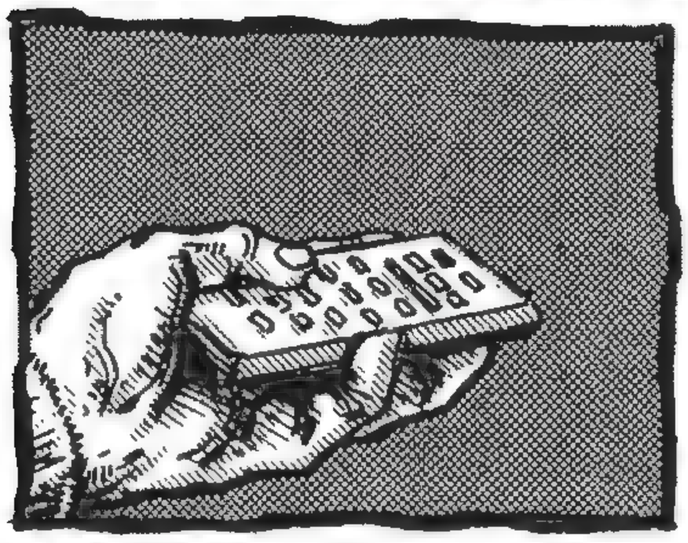
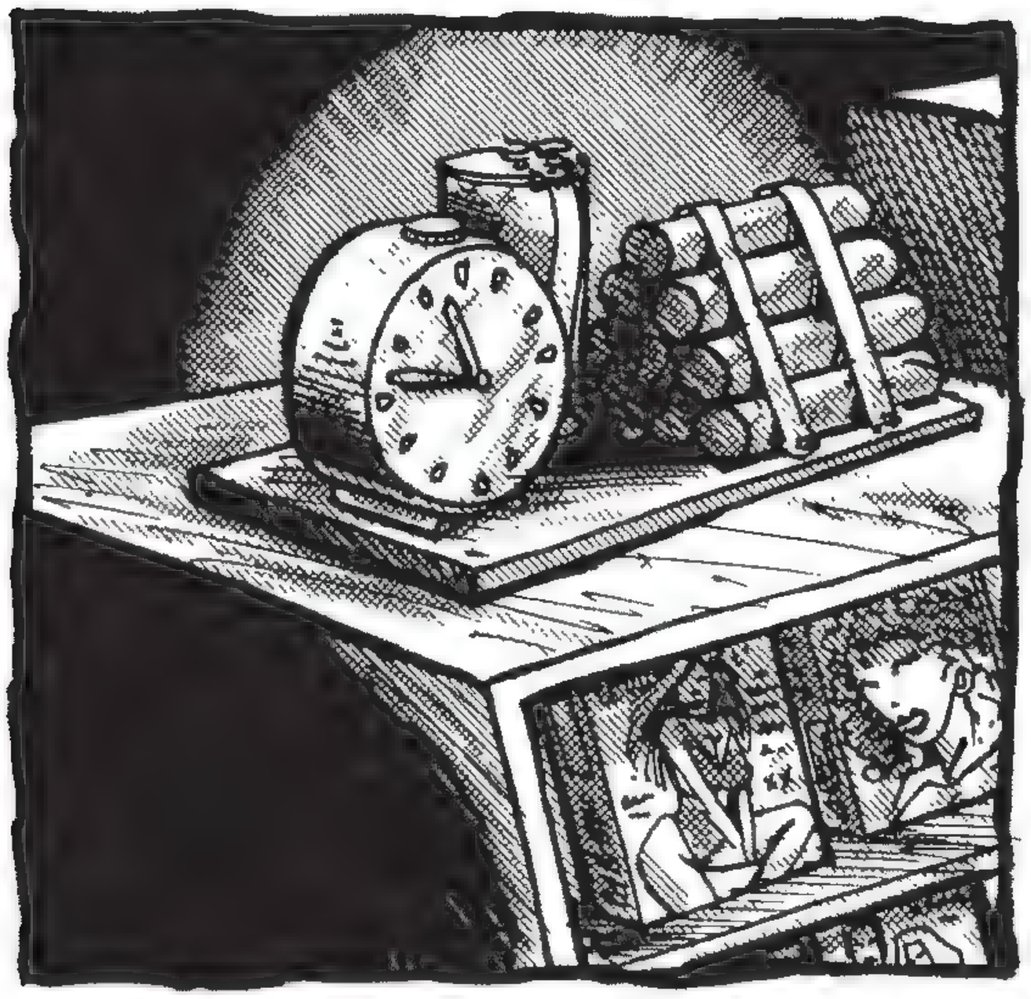
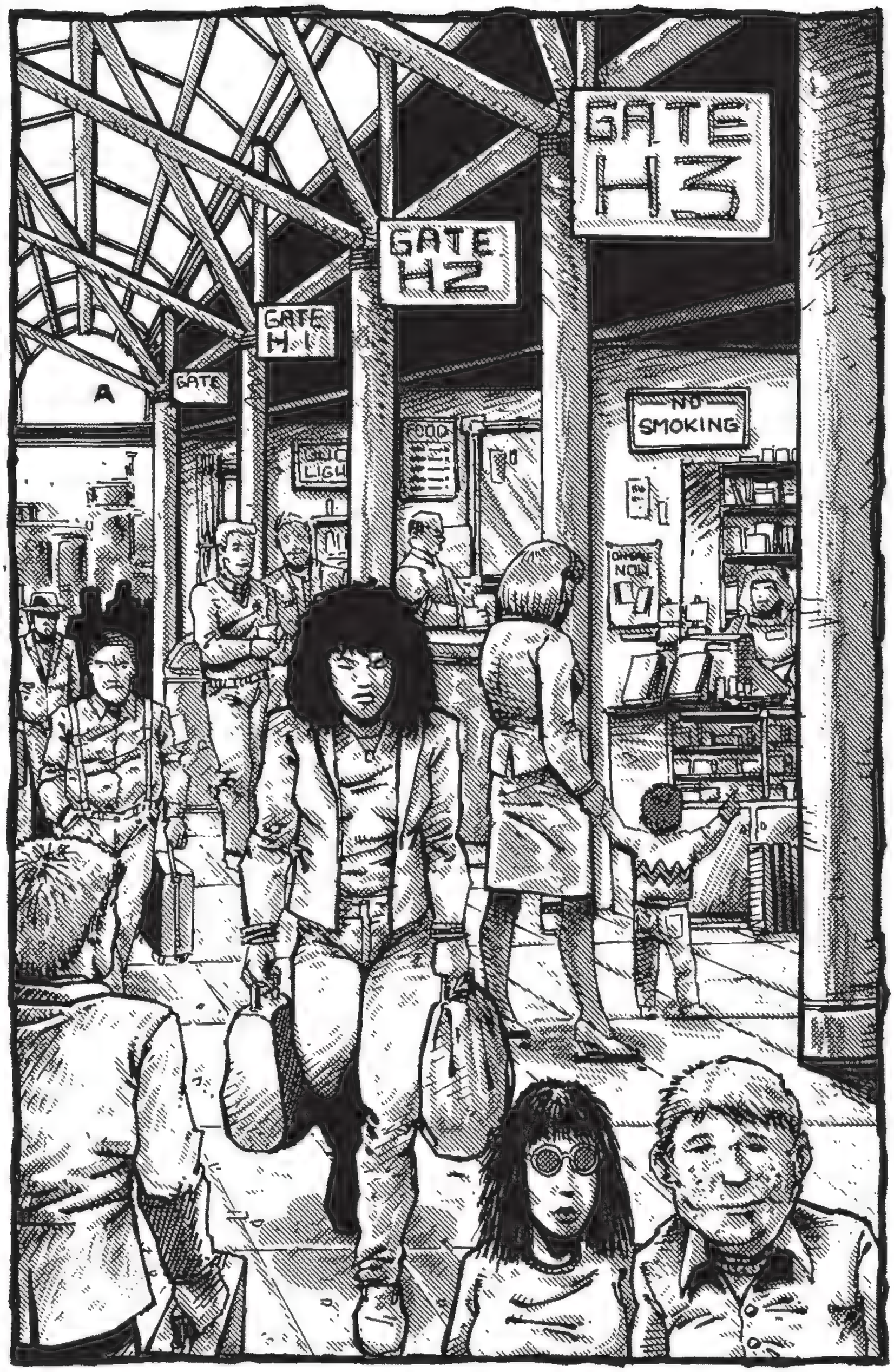




"...LEADERS OF THE COUP TODAY ESTABLISHED A CURFEW, AS ARMORED UNITS MOVED INTO VARIOUS MOSCOW LOCATIONS..."






GATE H3
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A
NO SMOKING

JONES
"...THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN CLASHES WITH RIOT TROOPS. RUSSIAN REPUBLIC LEADER YELTSIN CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION AND CRIMINAL TRIAL OF THE KREMLIN GROUP WHICH STAGED THE COUP..."

BOARDING
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GIRLS • GIRLS • GIRLS •
THE RETURN OF
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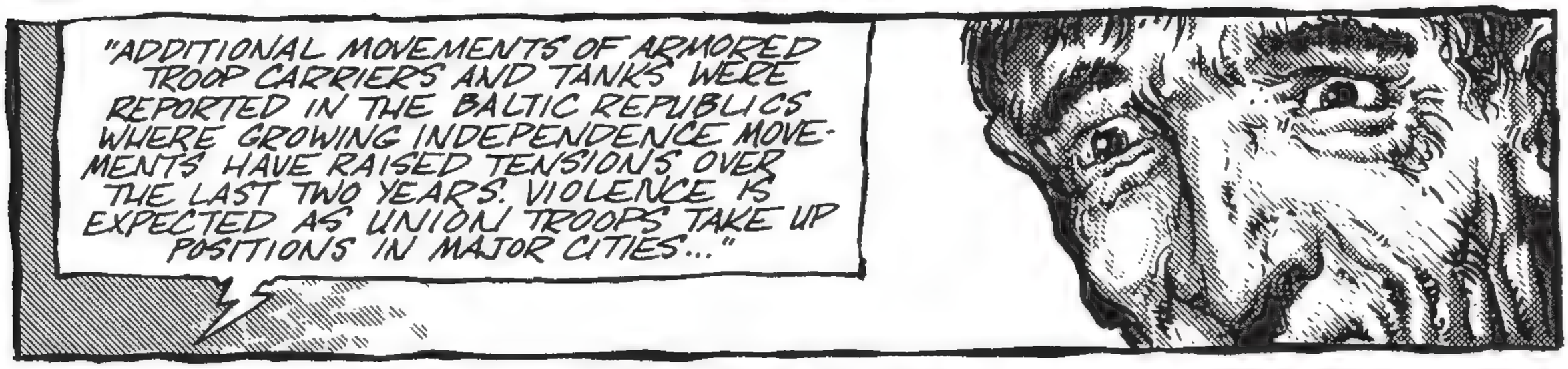
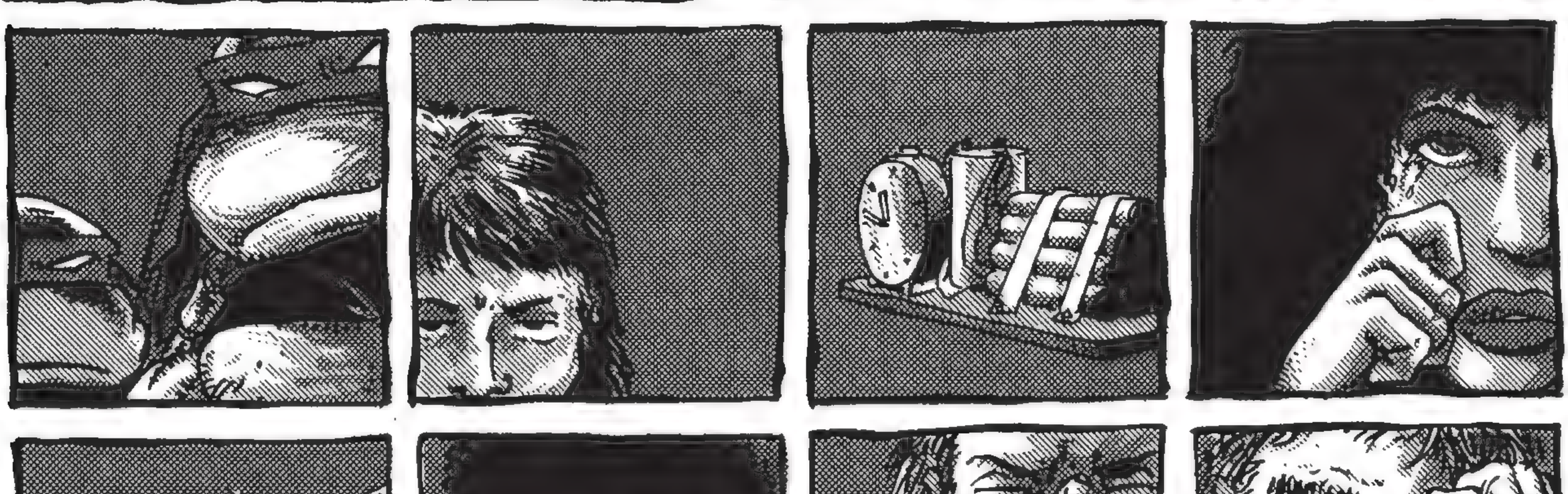
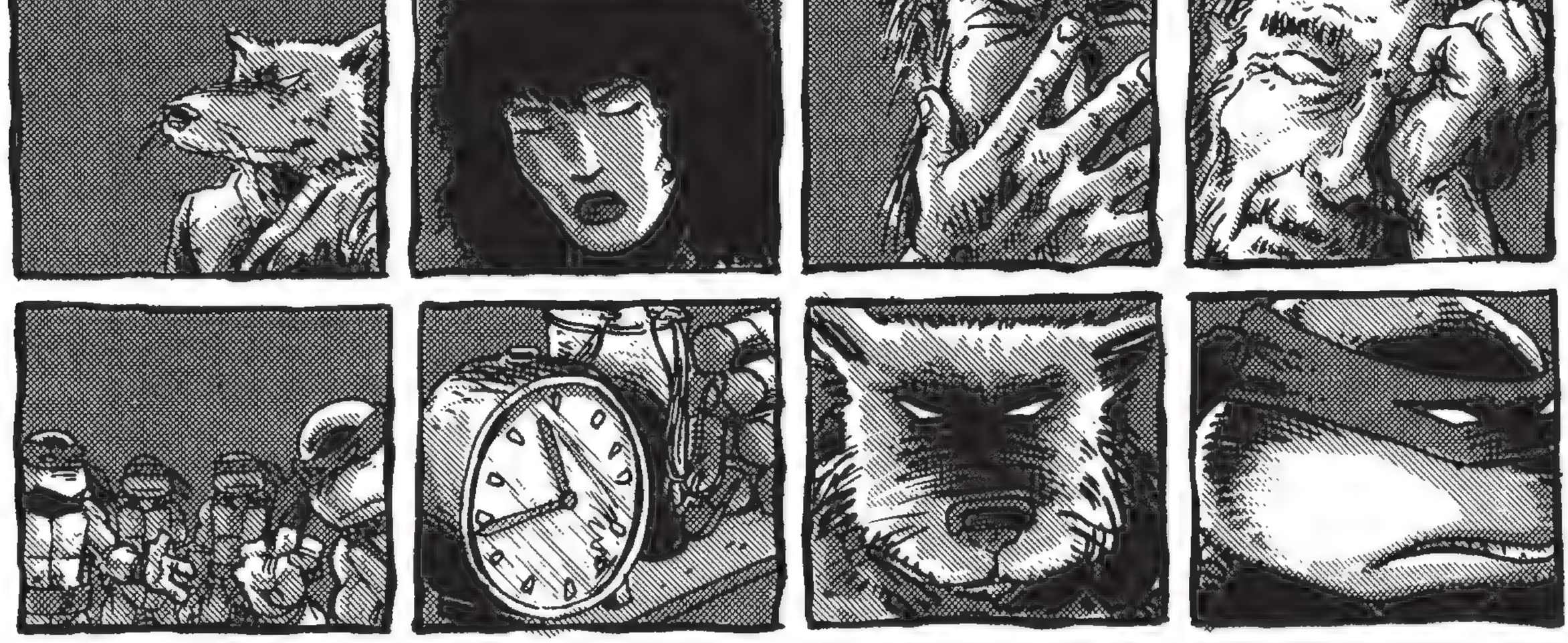

"ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS OF ARMORED TROOP CARRIERS AND TANKS WERE REPORTED IN THE BALTIC REPUBLICS WHERE GROWING INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS HAVE RAISED TENSIONS OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS. VIOLENCE IS EXPECTED AS UNION TROOPS TAKE UP POSITIONS IN MAJOR CITIES..."





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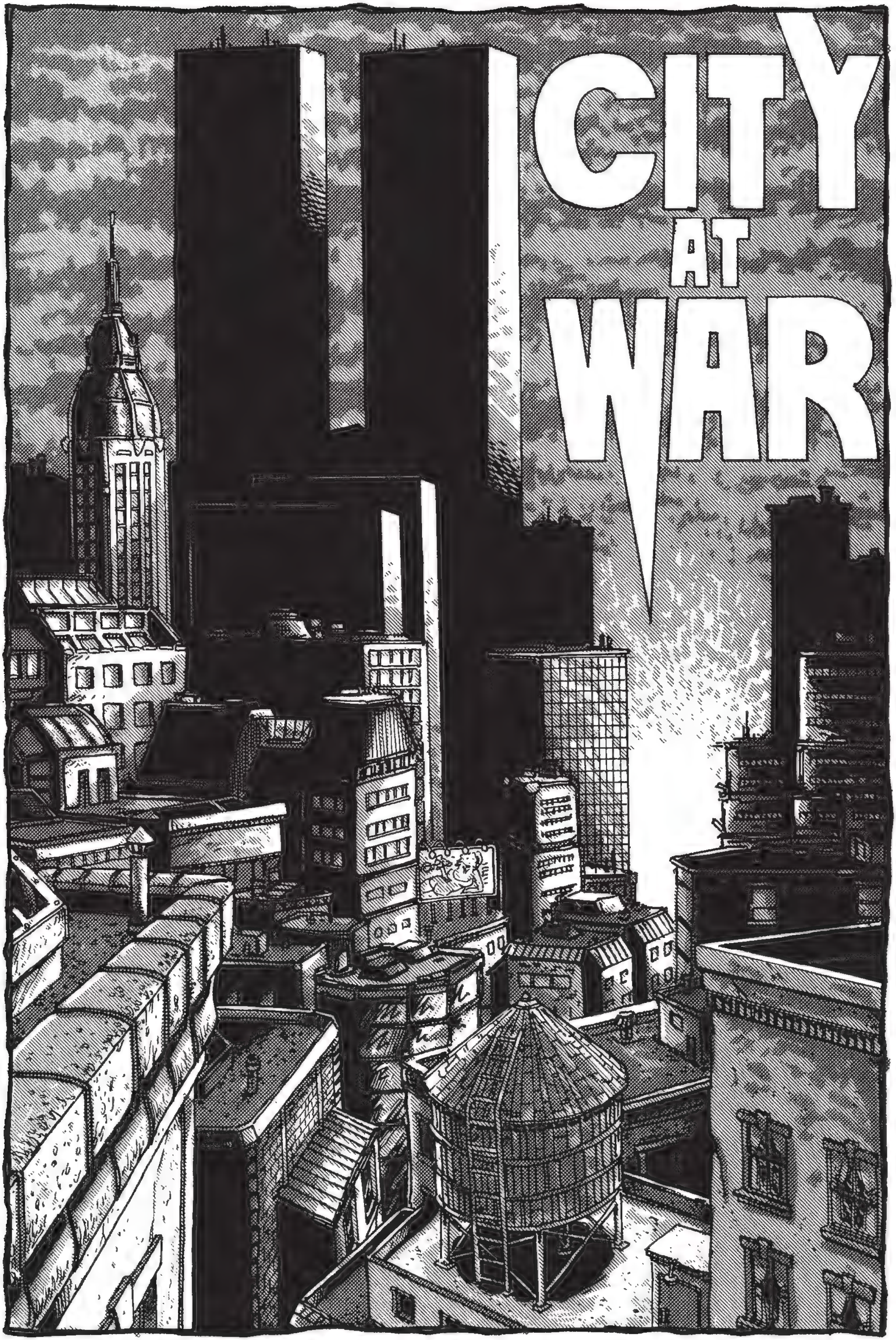
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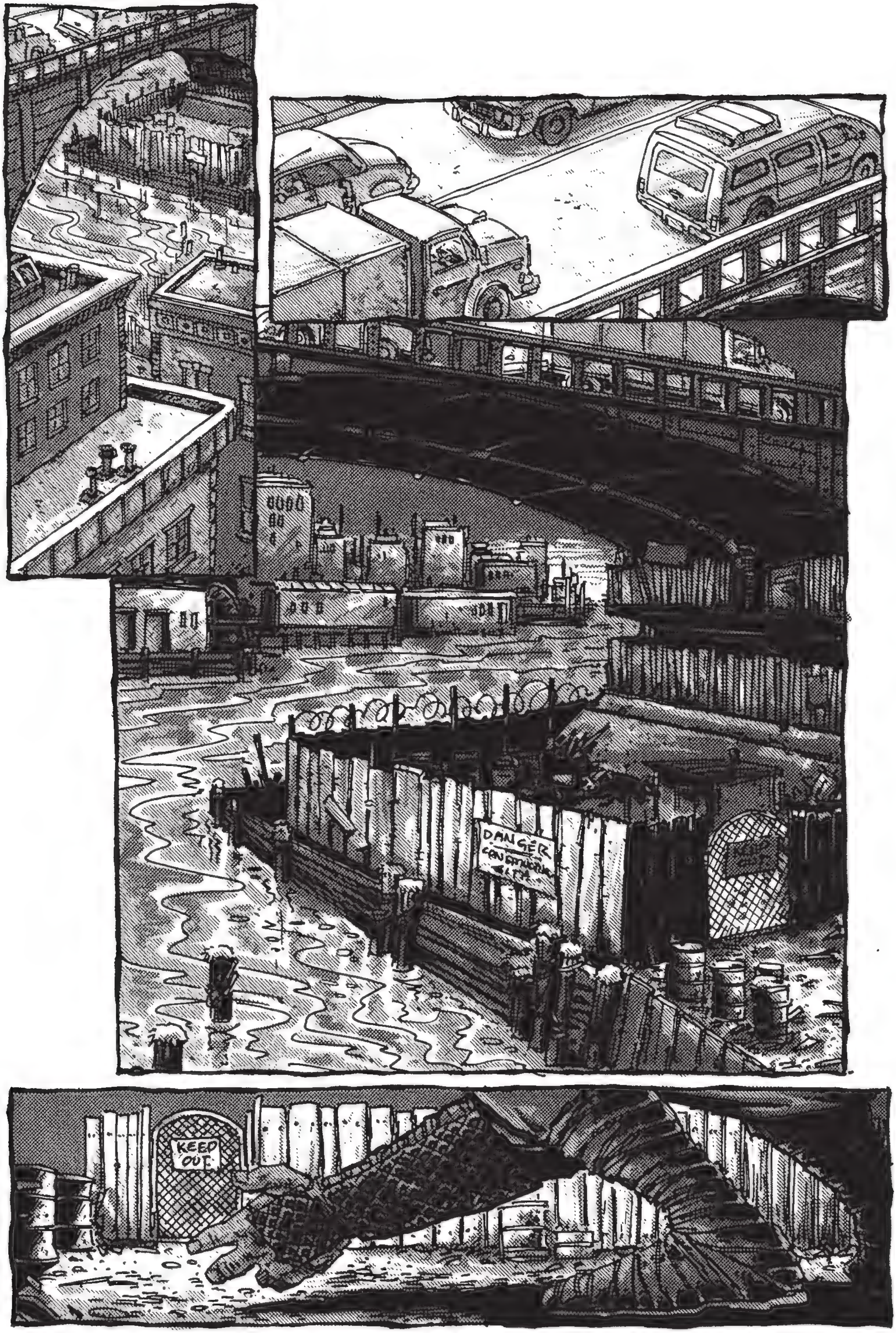
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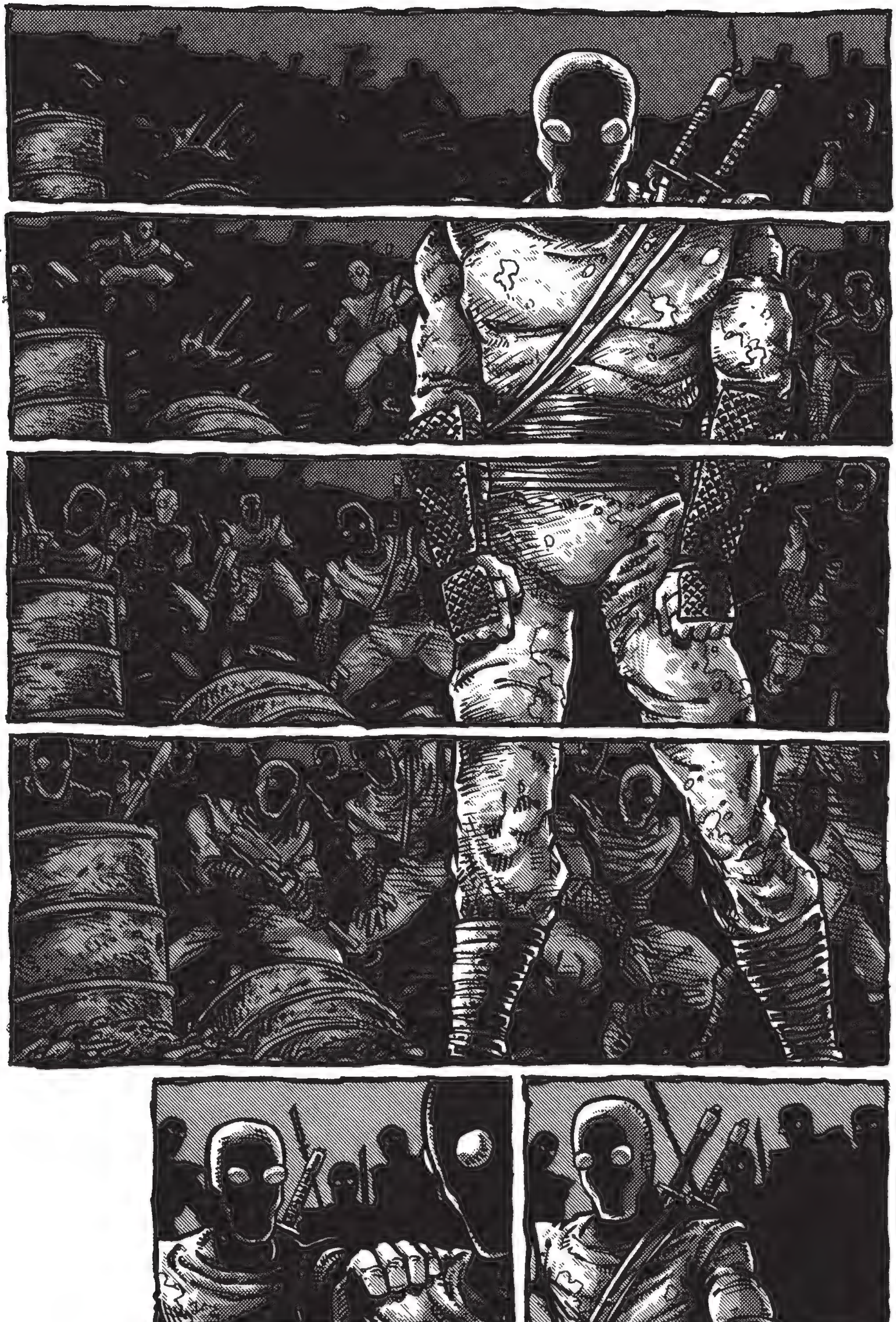
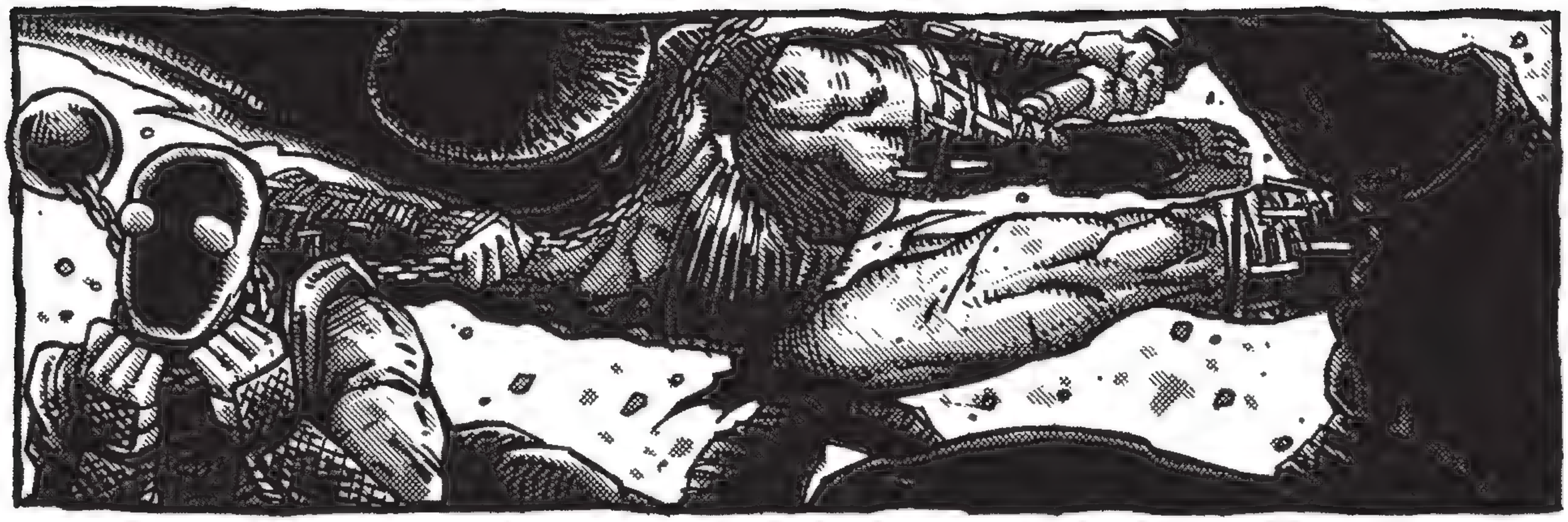
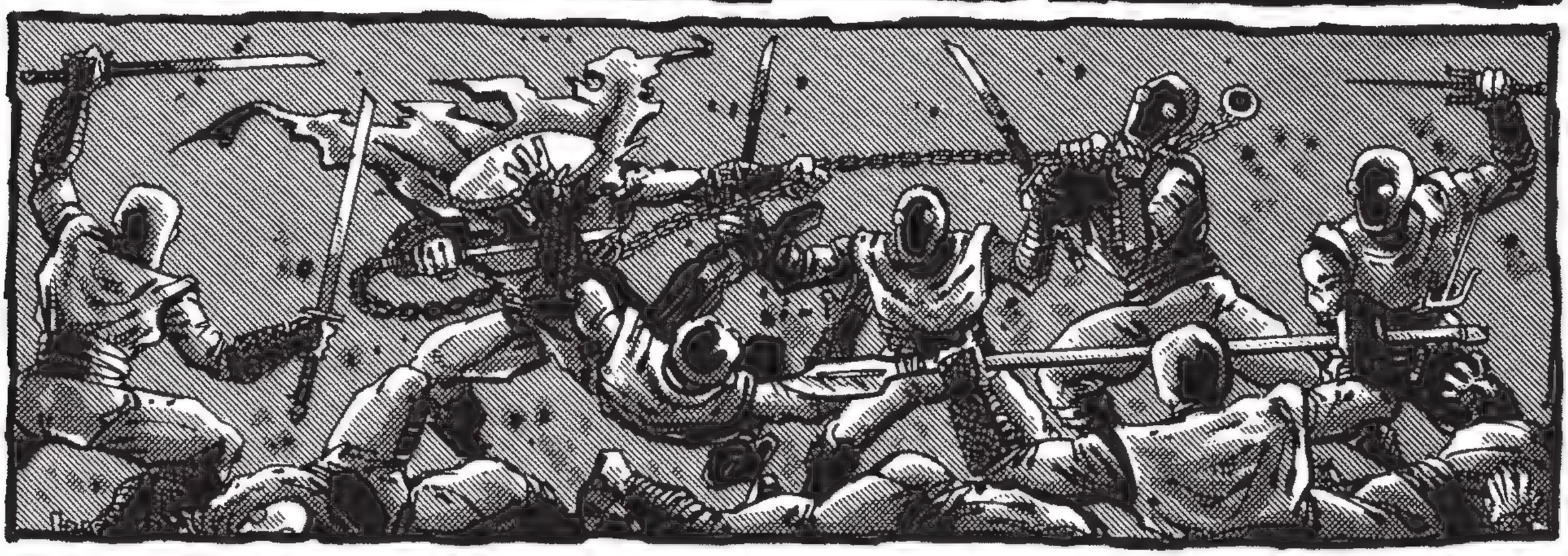
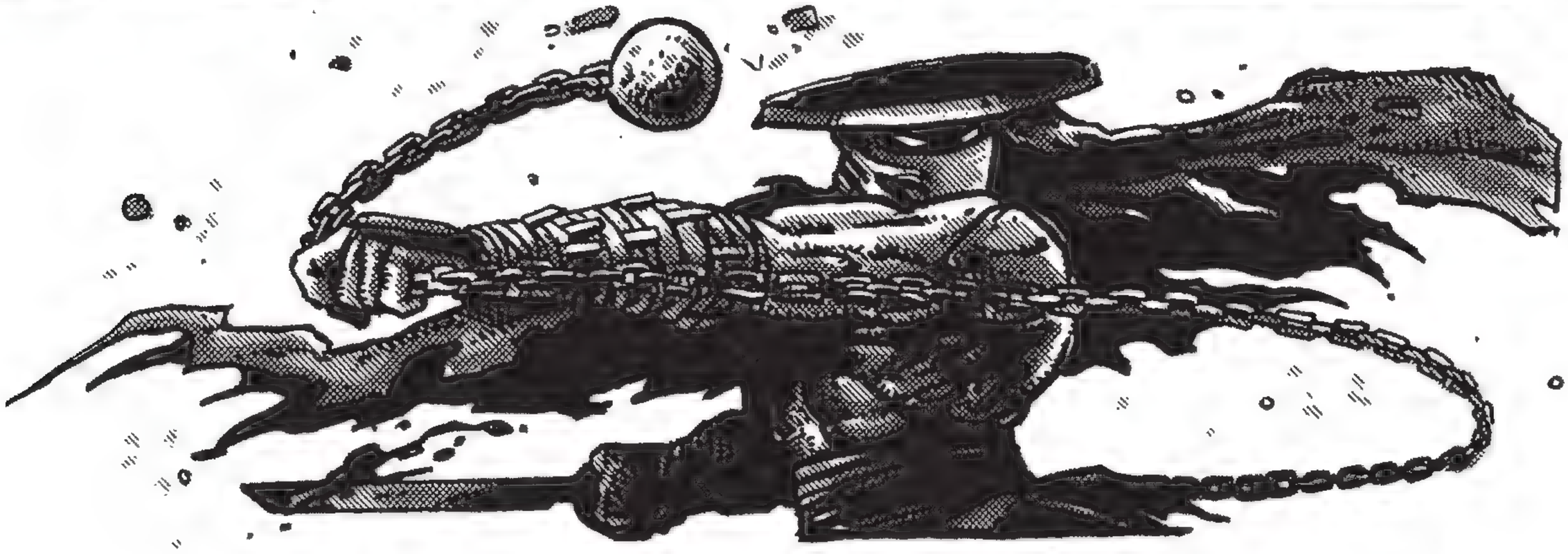
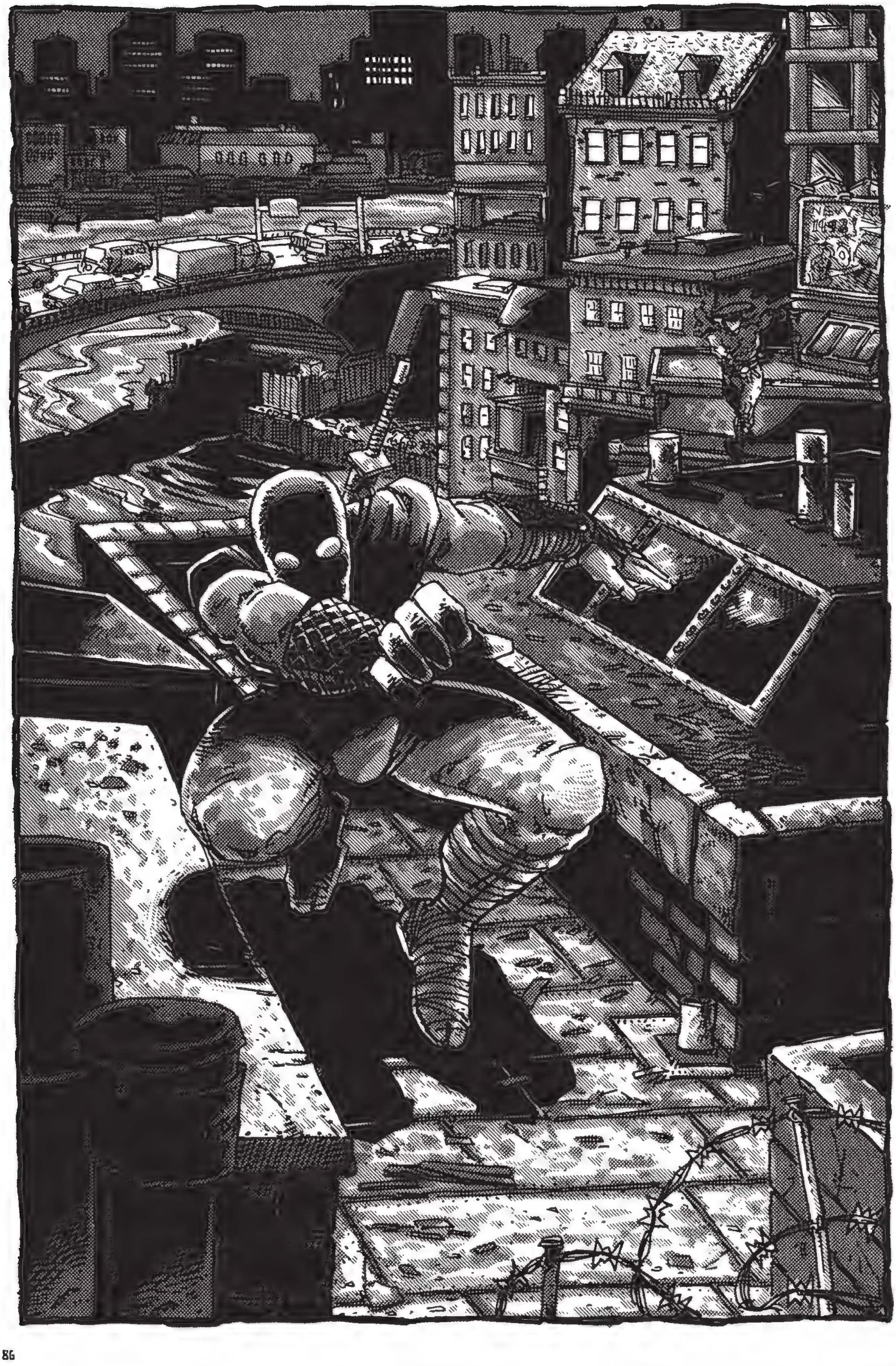
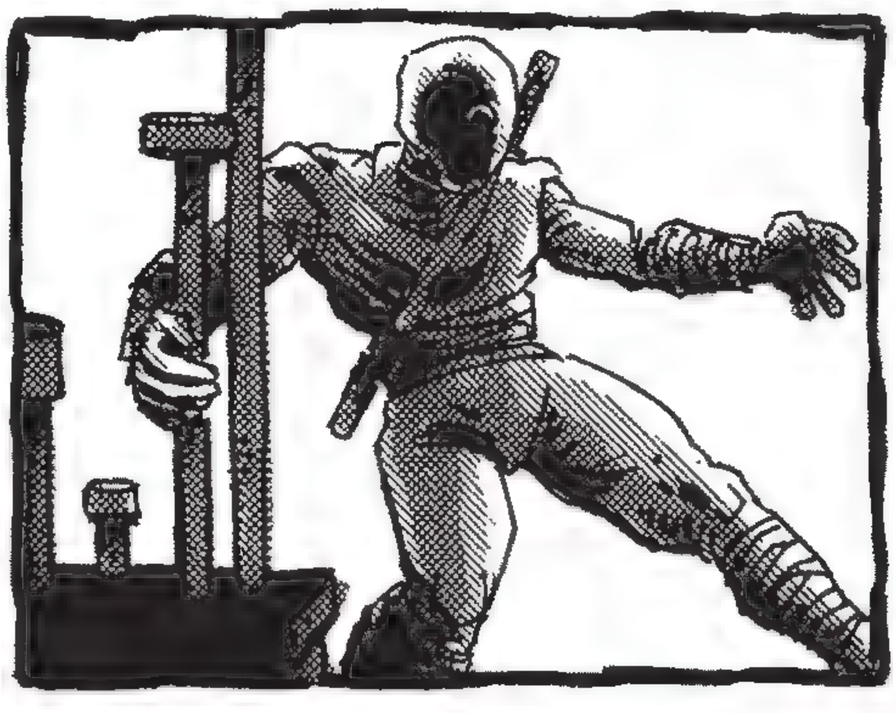


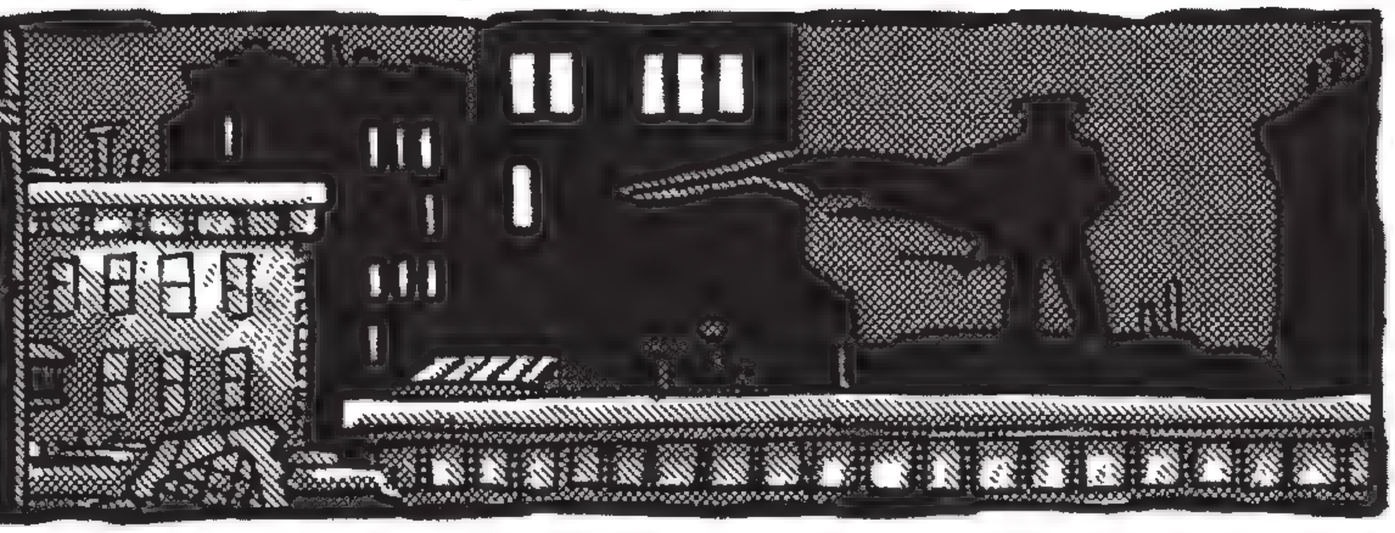


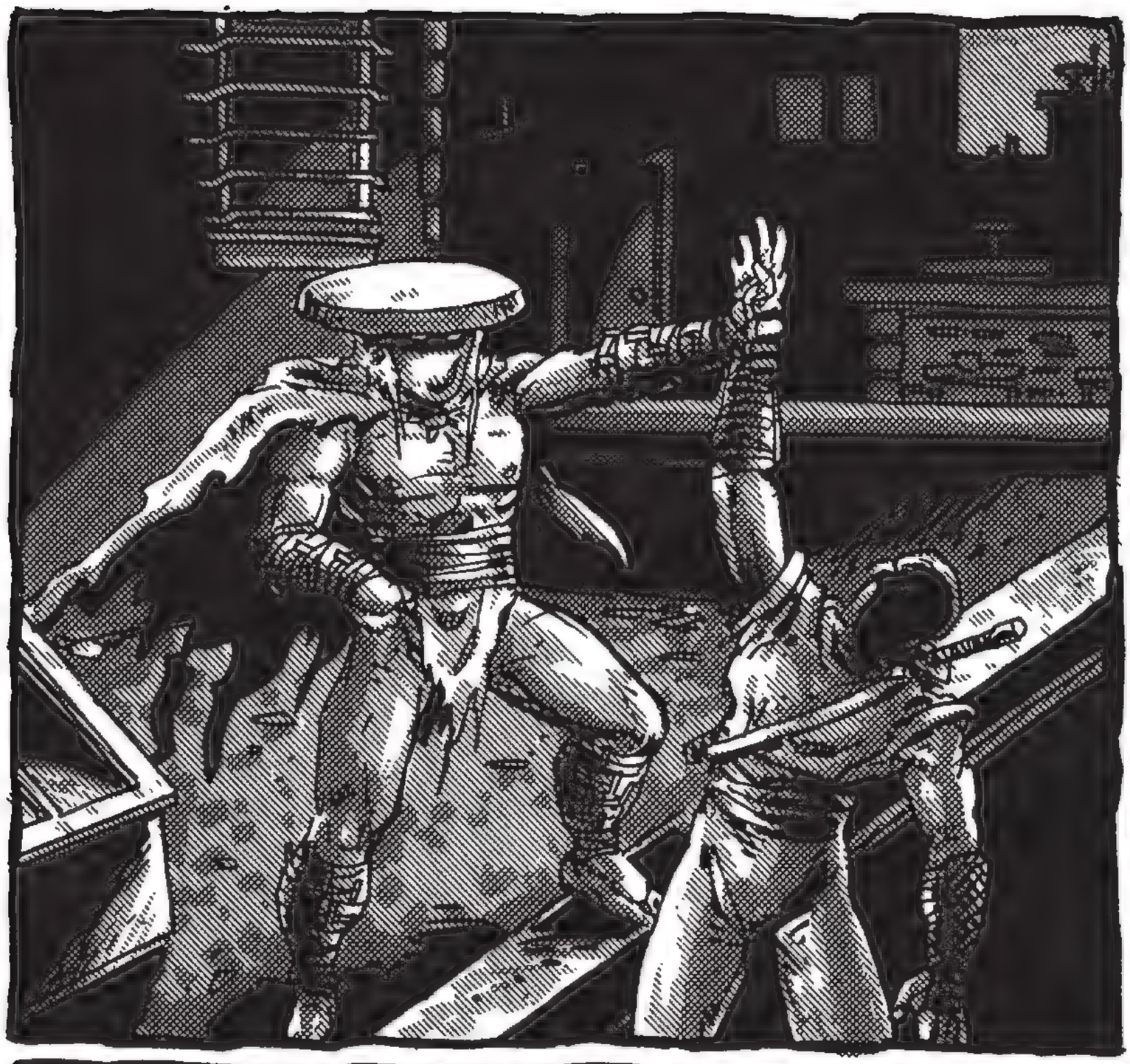


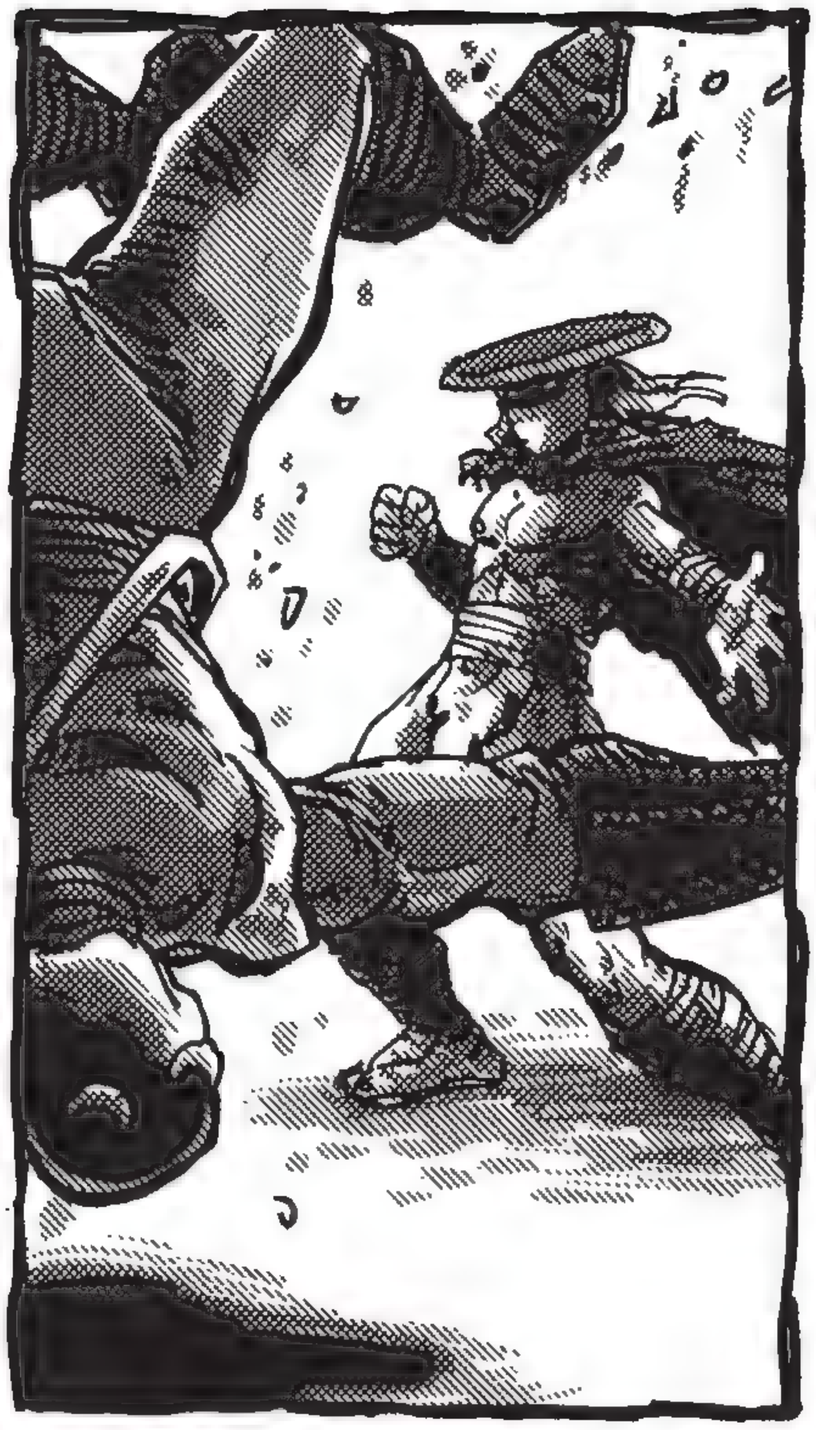


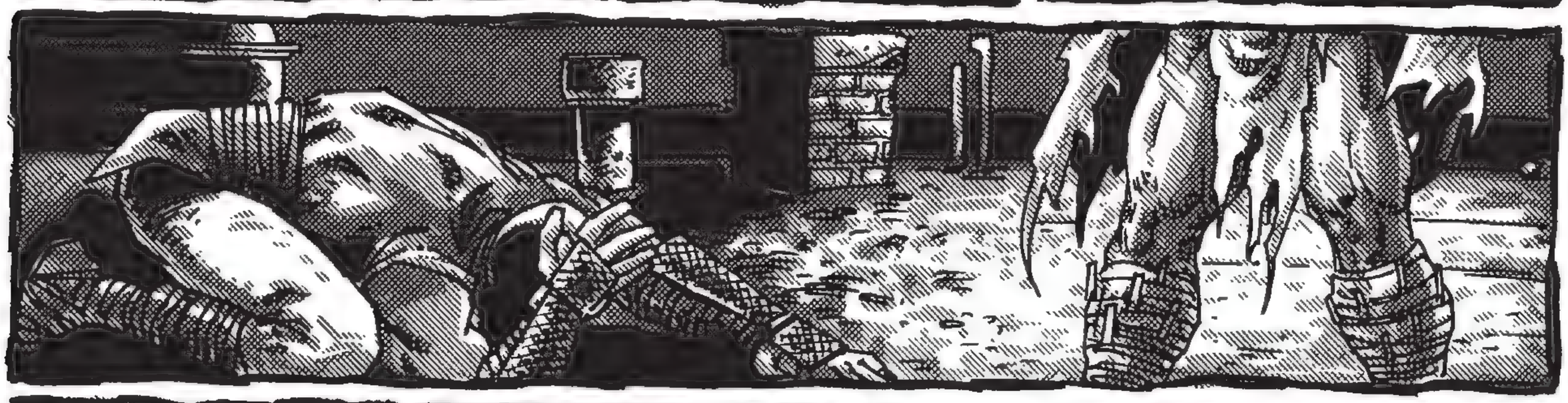


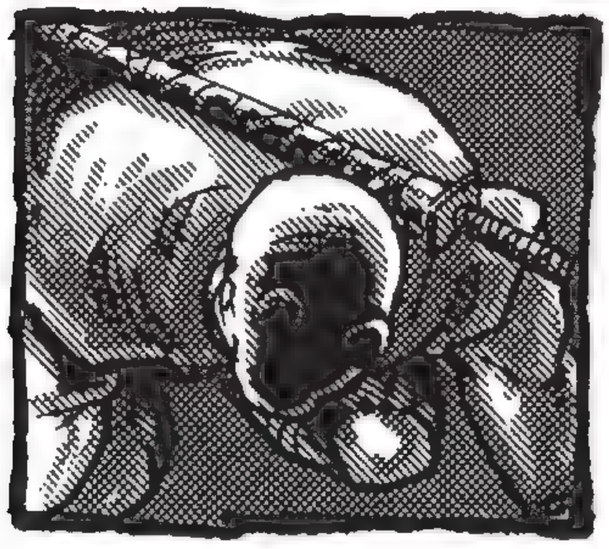


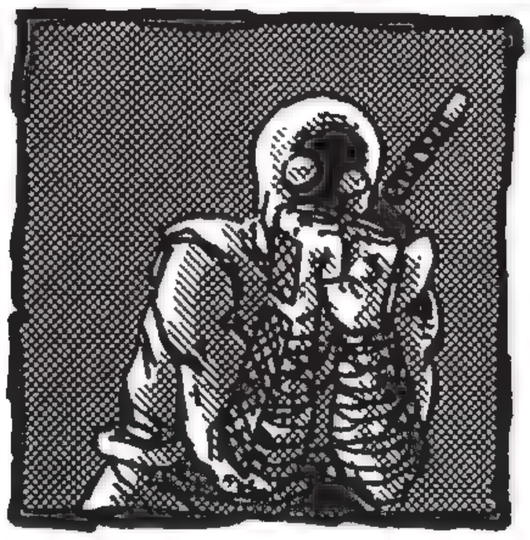


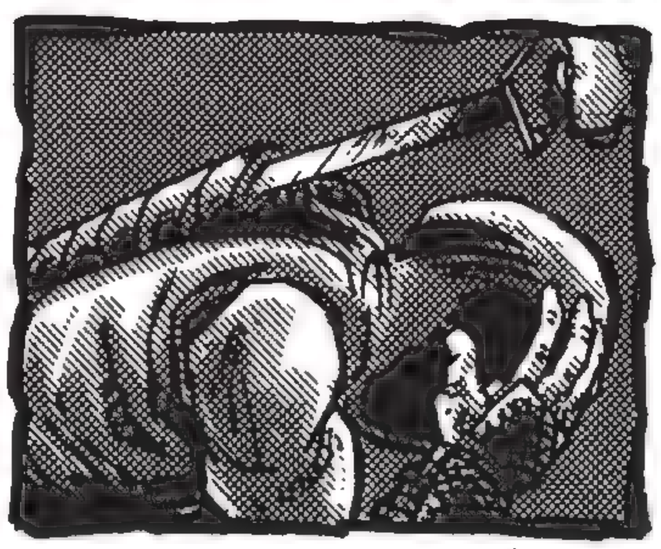


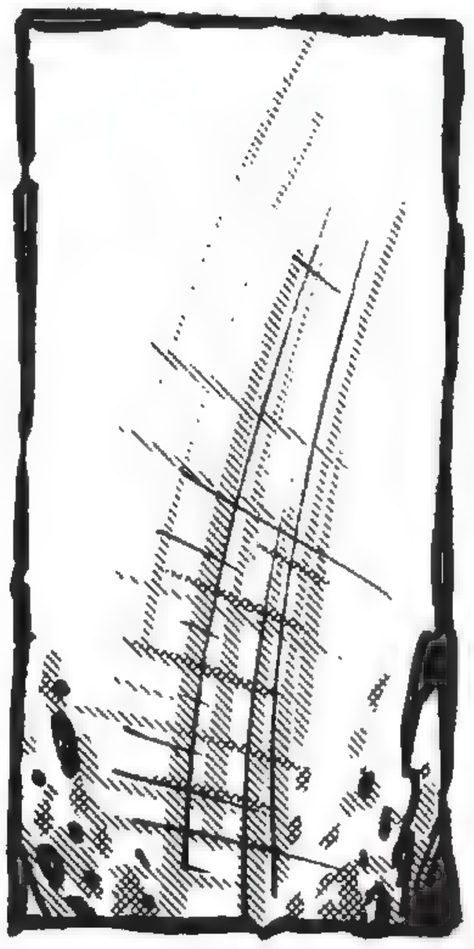


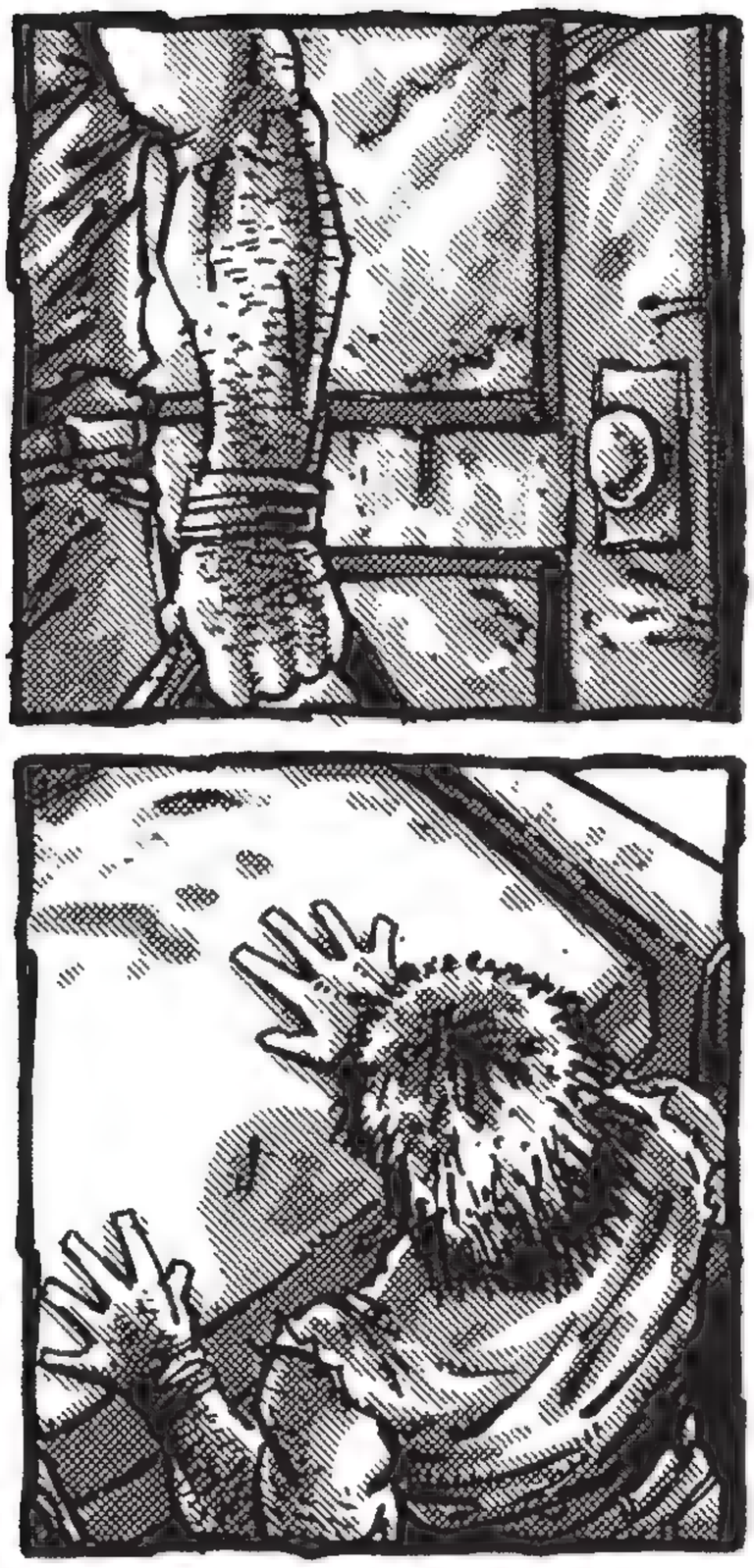


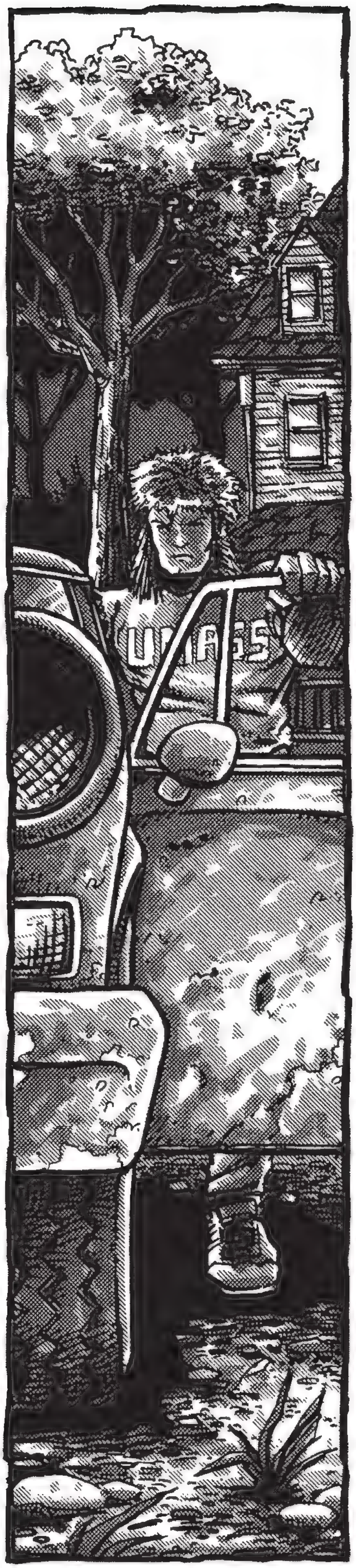


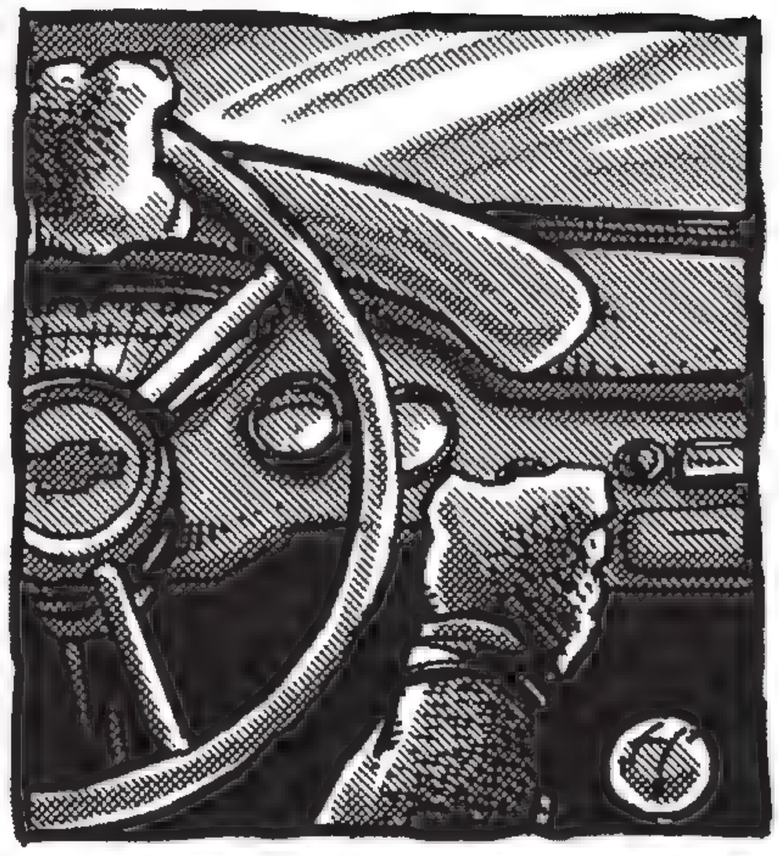


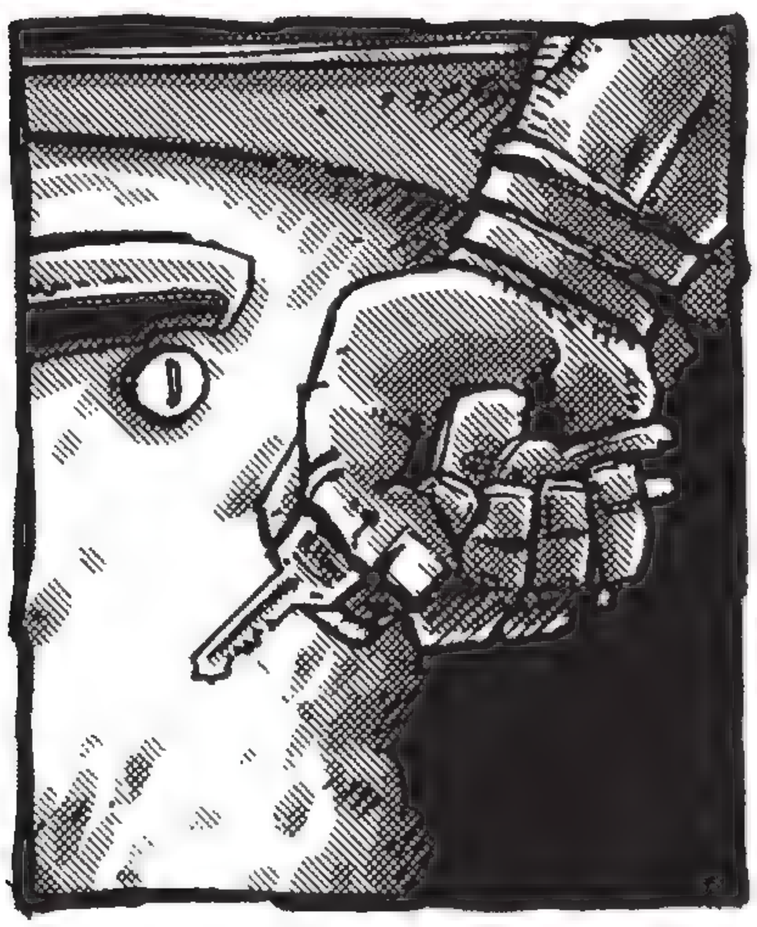


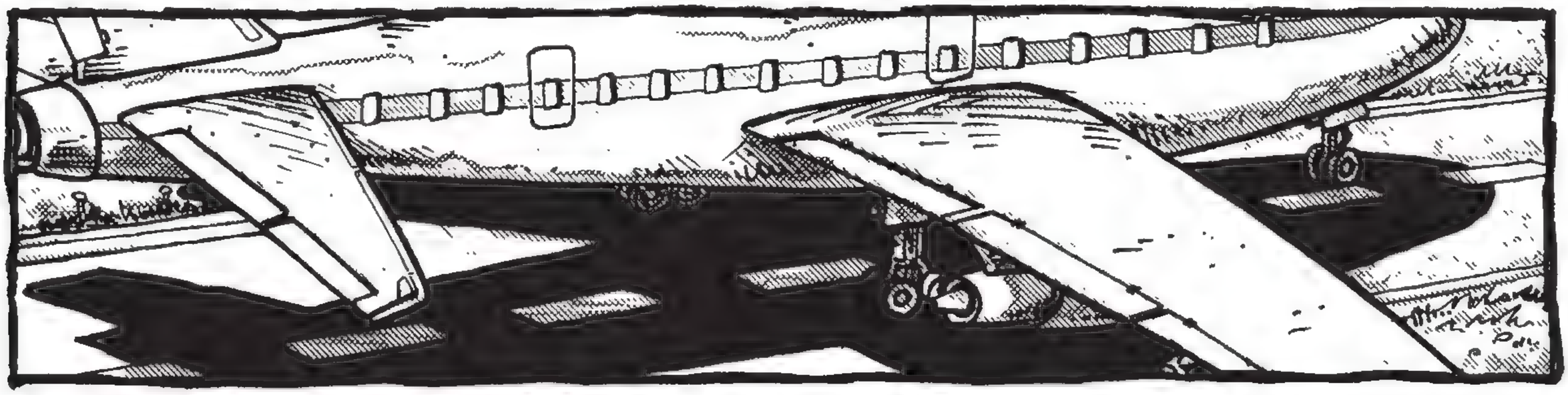


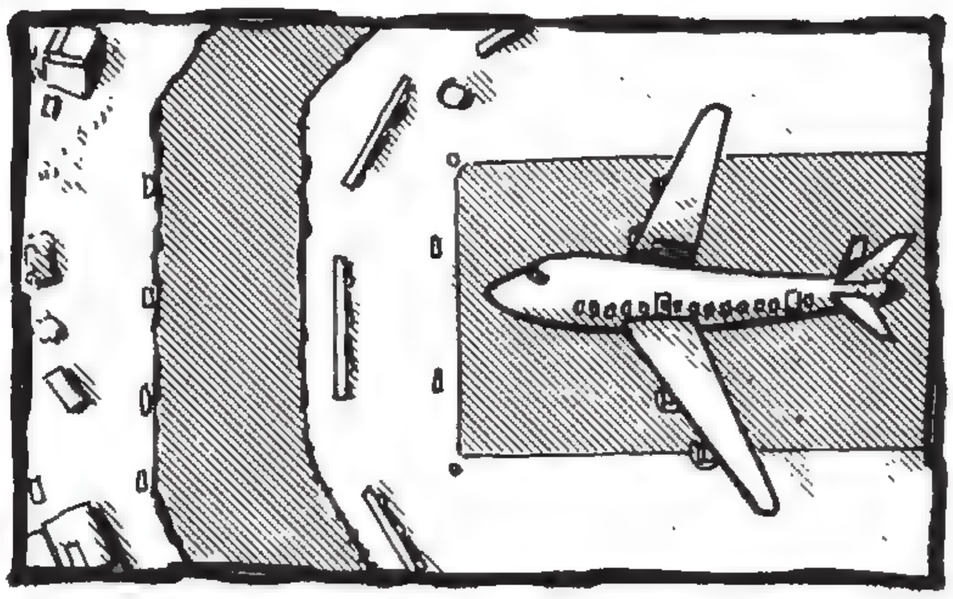


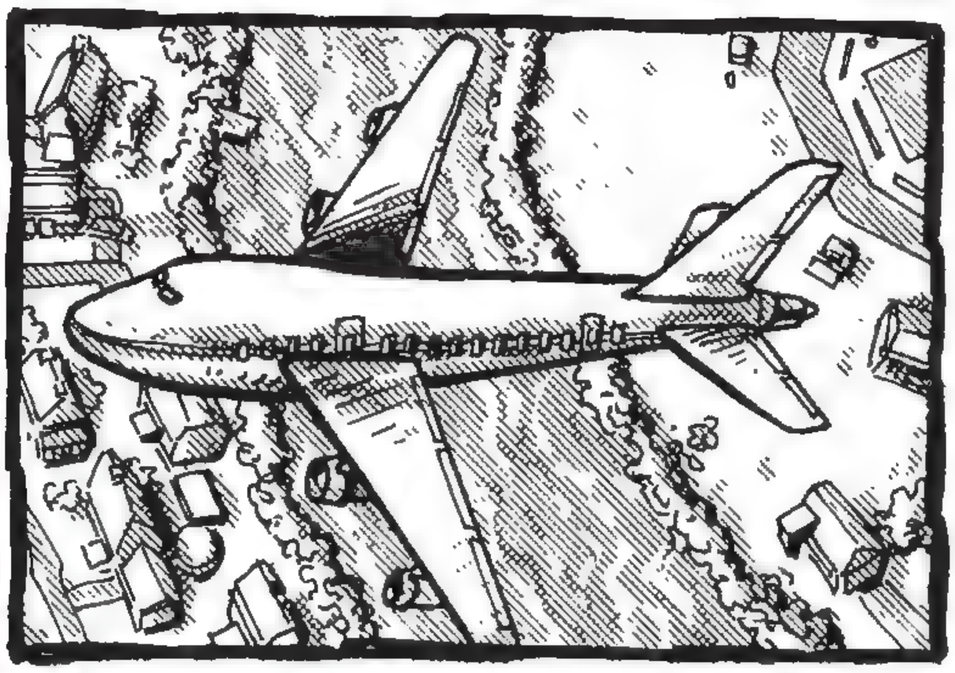


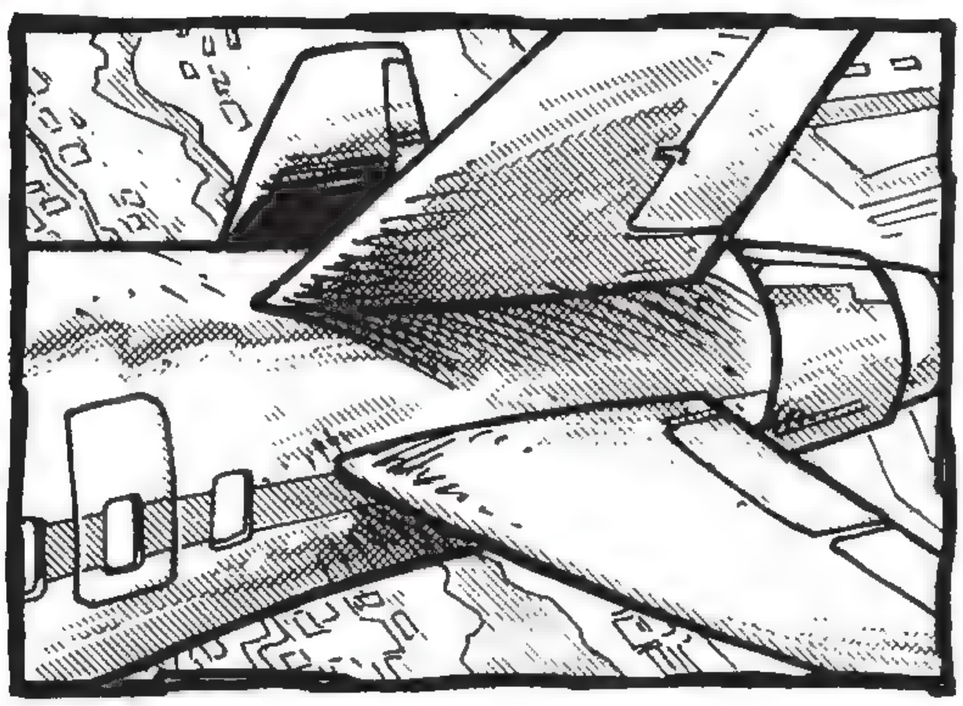


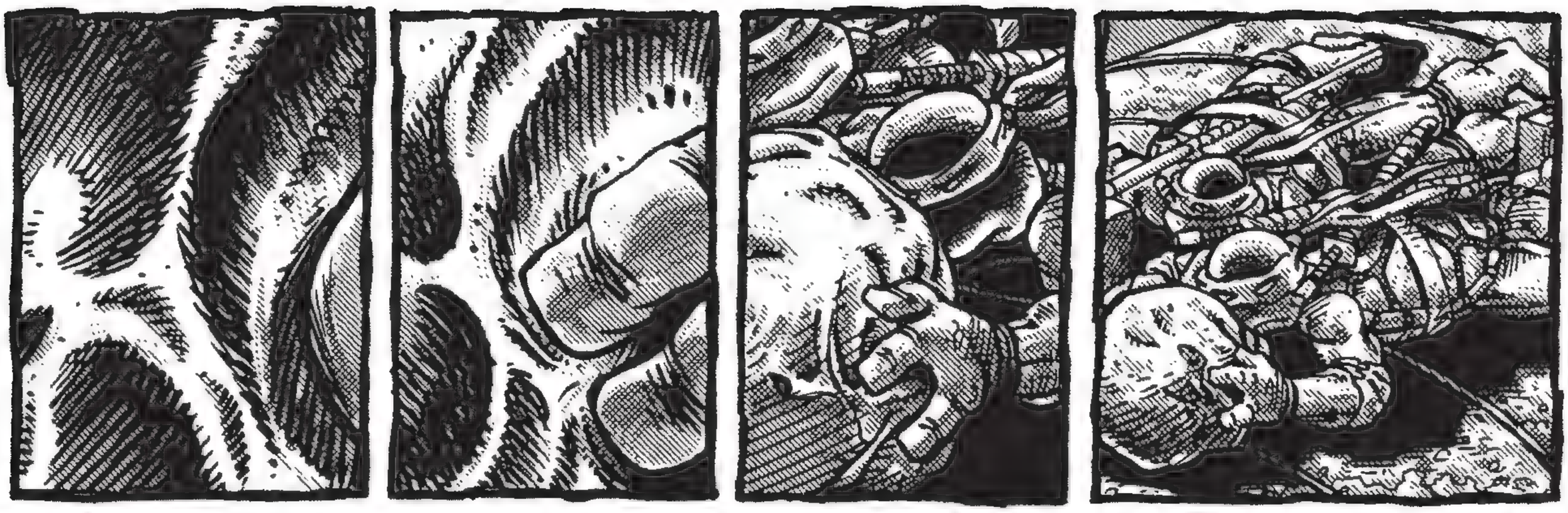


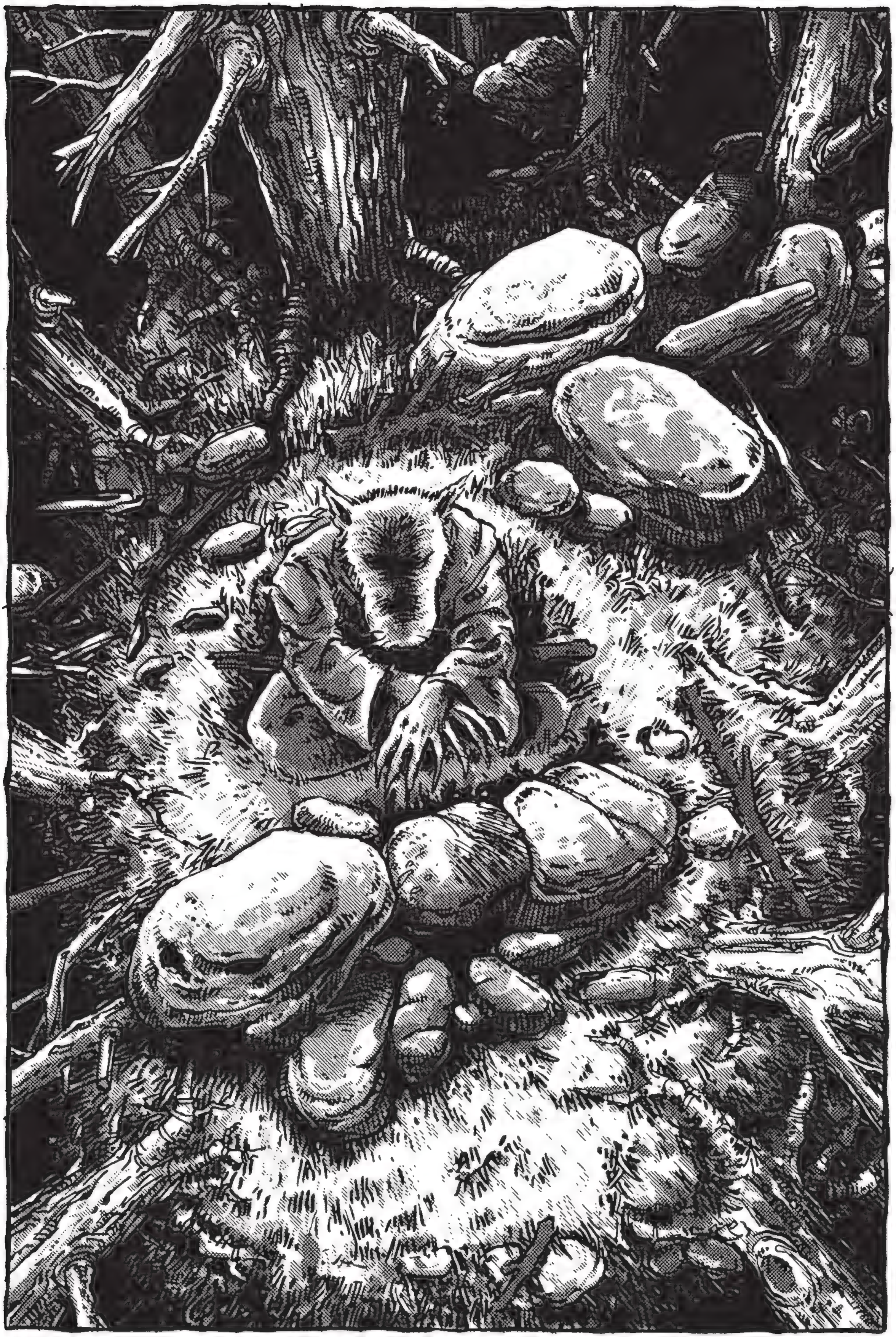




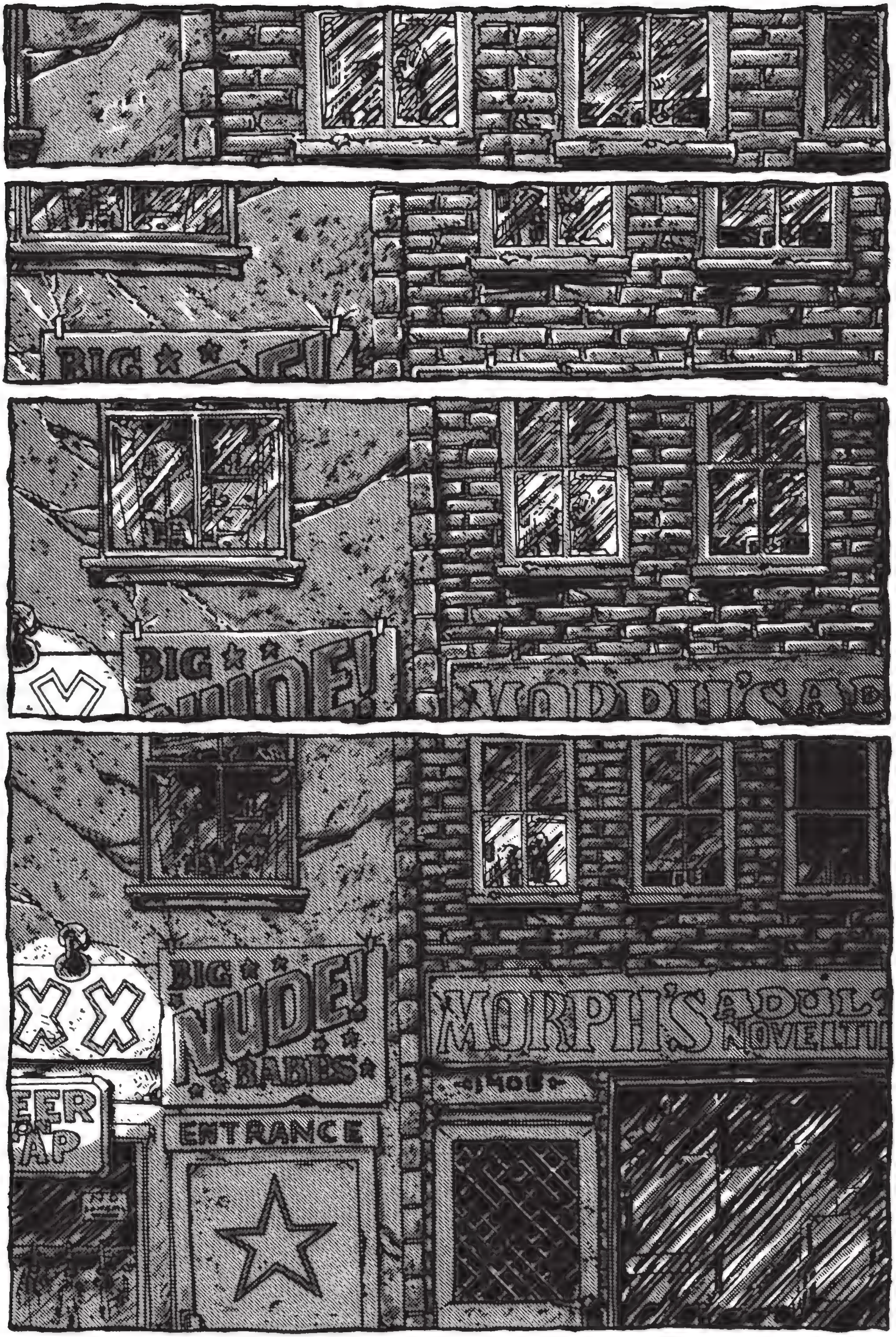





WHITE PLAINS
NEW YORK



"... ANALYSTS VIEW THIS COUP AS PERHAPS THE FINAL BLOW TO THE CRUMBLING SOVIET UNION. BUT AS TENSIONS MOUNT AND SIDES ARE TAKEN, ONE CAN ONLY GUESS AT WHAT CHAOS LIES AHEAD WHEN THAT FINAL FRAGMENTATION OCCURS...


BIG TITTIES
BIG TITTIES
BIG TITTIES
MORPH'S ADULT NOVELTIES
XXX
BIG TITTIES
ENTRANCE

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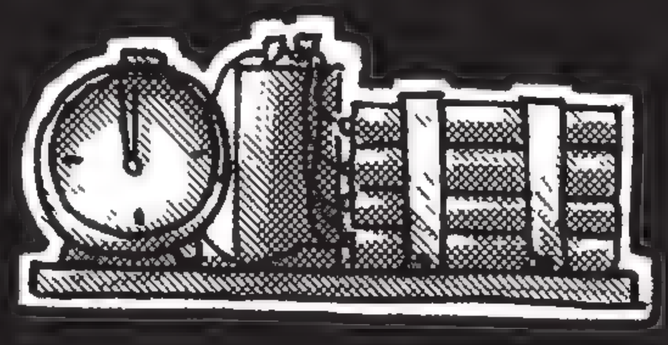
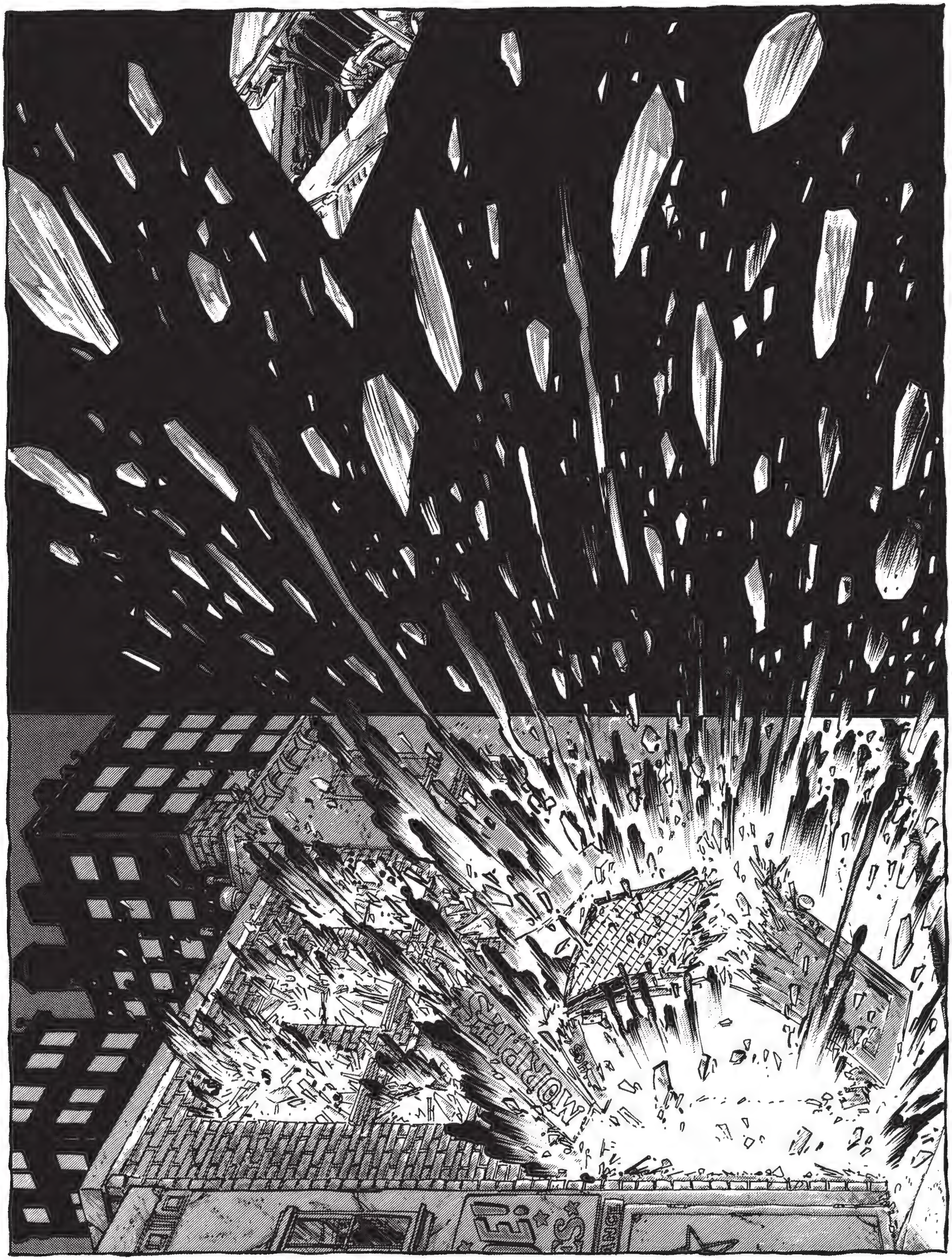



TOMORROW

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

Here we are at the milestone—issue #50 of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I'm pretty sure that when Peter and I were sitting across from each other at 28 Union Street, Dover, New Hampshire (the building was just torn down a year or so ago), we never imagined that we would be working on or talking about the 50th issue of anything either of us had done, or been a part of. This was pretty awesome—and then some.

Even though it was a relatively short eight years in our life-span, it had been jam-packed, right down to the millisecond with more success—and the work that goes into that success—than some folks see in an entire lifetime. And if you read our separate introductions for this issue (see next page), you can clearly see the cracks and struggles on the one hand, offset with glossy oblivion on the other.

I think though we might have thought otherwise, and I'm not sure who would've been the first to admit it then (if at all)—but personally, looking back, I feel like we both knew we were making the final studio album, "Let it Be." Of course I'm looking back with that 20/20 hindsight.

I feel like the script was fairly strong, with the A, B, and C plotlines intertwined in a way that was simple but relevant. The old immigrant watching his homeland implode and fracture into a million warring pieces—a frame of reference for us to play against the recently fractured Foot Clan after Leo beheaded the Shredder. And now that's exactly what was happening to the TMNT family—April leaves, Casey leaves, the TMNTs return to New York, and Splinter retreats to find a higher level of being. As a device, and giant prologue, it works.

However, as strong as some of them are, most of my layouts seem to lack focus and spark. I don't know, I can't put my finger on it exactly—mostly a gut feeling, I guess. But I know that when Peter and I talked this issue through, and decided on four word balloons in 44 pages of story—and all from unseen news broadcasters, talking about the crumbling Soviet Union—I can't get past the splinter-stuck-in-a-nerve feeling somewhere in the back of my brain. The feeling that there was a shot to do something even more incredible, and I didn't take advantage of it because of all the things going on in our business and personal lives.

Regardless of what could have been, that's probably more of a discussion to be had between two old co-creators one day. Let's talk about some of the cool bits we did do.

Pages 1–2: While I was running back and forth with the sections I was laying out, Peter would zero in and add the two-page spreads that open and close the story. The first of Splinter sitting by a stream, with the springtime forest full and lush, to the second one at the end, now a reverse shot of Splinter, still sitting in the same position, but now the late Fall forest gives up the ghost and waits for winter's first snow. Quite a powerful statement.

Page 4: Not a hundred percent sure why we chose a "Sex Shop" for the old man to live above, to be honest—and looking back, I think it is a bit distracting actually. I think a more subtle version of "Hell's Kitchen" would have been more than sufficient, but we also needed a pretty obvious statement of Shredder's citywide crime empire. We were trying to show that he ran everything, and now, as we see at the end of the story, it is all being dismantled.

Pages 4–14: I am happy with many of the transitions and the number of flashes to key characters on the same pages or spreads, all doing separate but related things: getting ready to leave, leaving, planting a bomb, or simply stuck in life going nowhere. No one is happy or proud of the decisions they are all forced to make.

Pages 15–27: Easily my favorite section—no surprise there. The 13-page fight scene that starts with the Twin Towers shot and ends with one of Shredder's Elite Guards beheading a Foot Grunt Soldier is probably as close as I ever got to the Leonardo Micro-Series One-Shot as far as pace and intensity. But I think I should have topped it.

In fact, I'm going to need to find a way to top them both one day soon.

So, that was it really. There were 12 more issues to go, but this was pretty much the final Eastman and Laird outing (besides a series of covers here and there). The end of an era…

ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

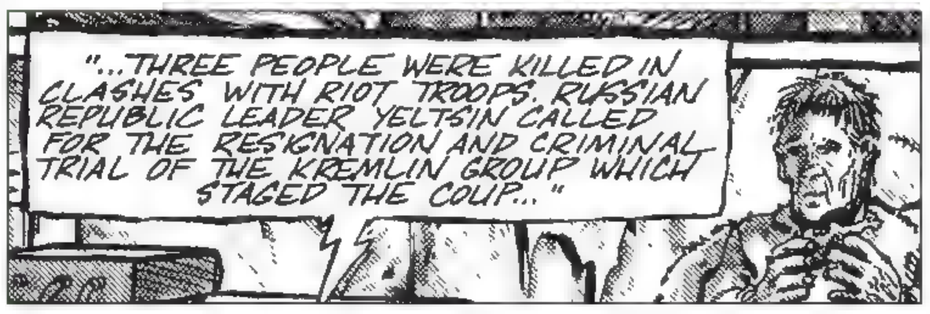
This issue was, at the time, a big deal for us, because it was the first time in years that Kevin and I had actually gotten together and DRAWN a whole issue together. It was also the beginning of the longest story we'd ever done—13 issues, or 15 if you count the "Shades of Gray" issues that preceded and led into it. I remember it as being fun in parts and frustrating in others. But overall, I think this mostly wordless issue worked pretty well. Kevin did some of his best, most savage fight scene layouts in this issue, for the lengthy bit where one Shredder Elite Guard takes on a whole group of Foot soldiers.

I only have a few specific comments about this issue.

If memory serves, the opening and closing two-page spreads were drawn by me—I think from a layout by Kevin, but I am not completely certain. At this point in time, I can't remember WHY we made this choice. But it was fun to do, with the passing of time indicated by the fallen leaves in the second spread.

One thing sticks in my mind about the planning of this issue. For the brief bits where we had news reports coming out of various radios, Kevin had originally wanted to create some imaginary Middle Eastern state, but I objected to that, saying it sounded too much like what DC was doing around that time in the Superman books, with a faux state named "Qurac," which just—to me, anyway—sounded goofy. I convinced Kevin that we should use real places.

In rereading this issue, I realized I'd forgotten the nifty pinups we had in it from people like Eric Larsen,


"...THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN CLASHES WITH RIOT TROOPS. RUSSIAN REPUBLIC LEADER YELTSIN CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION AND CRIMINAL TRIAL OF THE KREMLIN GROUP WHICH STAGED THE COUP..."

Walt Simonson, and Todd McFarlane. There was also a cool group shot of a lot of the key Mirage TMNT characters, drawn by Eric Talbot, Mike Dooney, Steve Lavigne, Dan Berger, Ryan Brown, and Craig Farley.

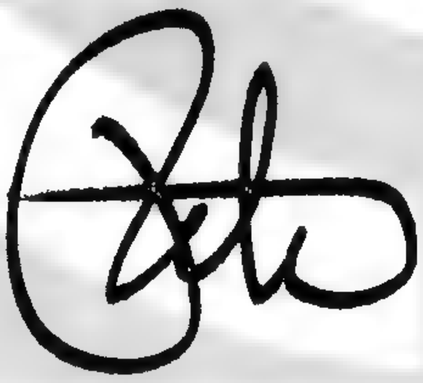
I always liked the last few story pages of this issue, after the bomb explodes in the shop, and the flying shards of glass become scenes of the breakup of the TMNT family.

Most comic book titles reach their fiftieth issue by the beginning of their fifth year. It's taken us over eight years to get to ours... and at times during the production of this issue, it felt like the whole eight years was spent doing these forty-plus pages.

That's partly because the work on this issue also included plotting issues 48, 49, and 51 through 62 -- the longest continued story we've ever done. But mostly it's because the work on this issue went in fits and starts over about seven months, with a million different things interrupting that work, and Kev and I actually being physically in the same location to work together on the book only a handful of times. It's a far cry from the days of the first several issues, when we sat in the same room almost every day, handing pages back and forth, pencilling, inking, and toning feverishly until the books were done... usually about a month and a half per book.

Yeah, it's been weird, and difficult, and very often frustrating... but I think it was worth it, because we've managed to bring the flagship Turtle title back to where it should be. "City At War" is going to clean out the cobwebs and clear the decks for a return to a solid continuity.

Let's rock!



For so many reasons (most of which I won't bore you with at this time) it's hard to believe I am sitting here writing an introduction for Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #50!

Before I put pen to paper, I had so many thoughts running through my brain -- who to thank for all the love, support, understanding and endurance throughout the last seven or so years -- you know, that kind of stuff. Well, I thought of all the people who have helped through the thick and thin. Only one person, who was there from day one, withstood all the frustrations, fits and accomplishments and managed to stay married to four crazy green characters with the success and the insanity of it all: Peter Laird, my partner in crime.

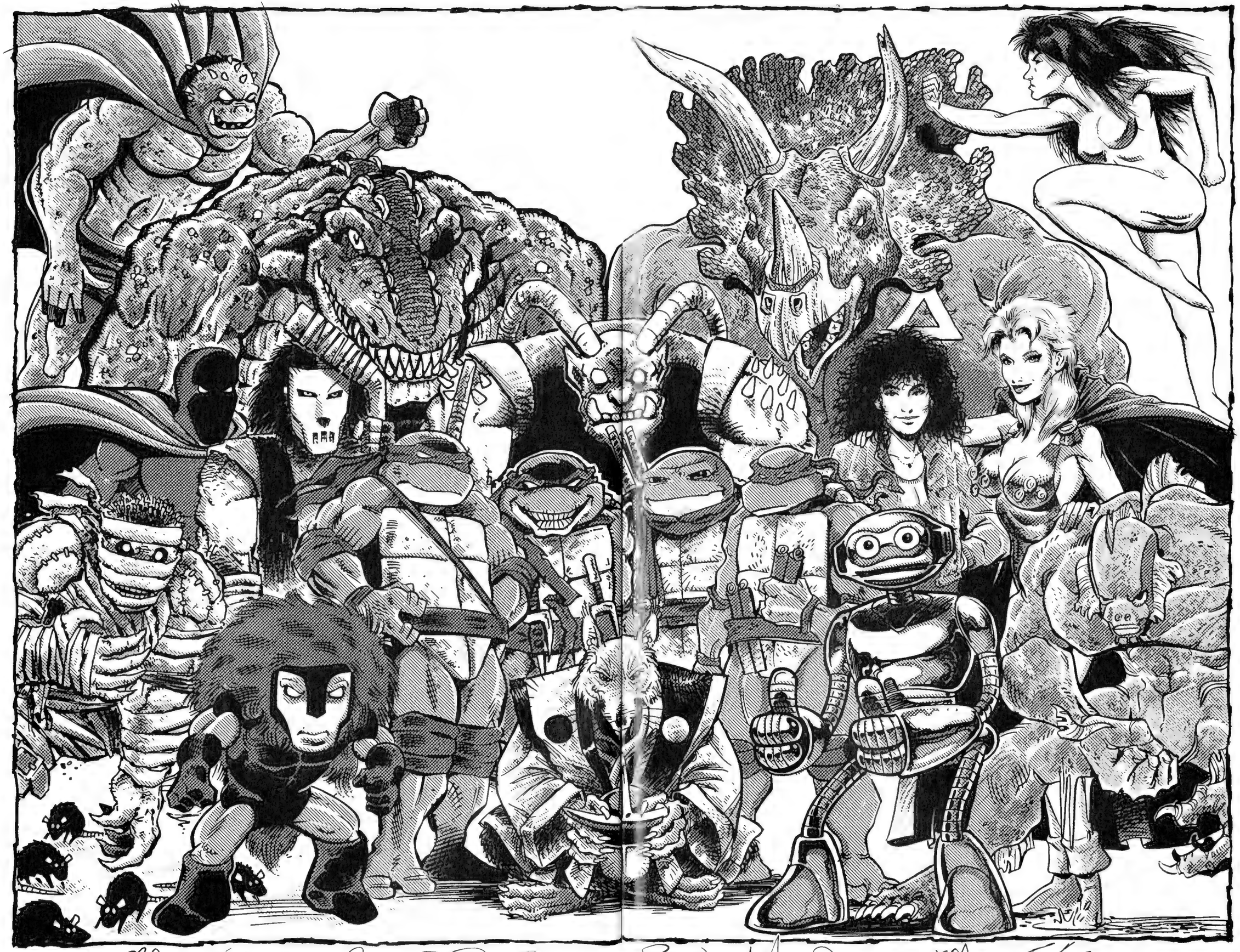
When we began the foundation of Issue #50, we sat like we did in the old days, tossing ideas around and arguing points. In many ways it felt as it should, as if not one moment had passed since Issue #1. All those feelings of excitement and energy were stronger than ever, as it should be. The creativity and the magic withstood the test of time -- after all, that is what brought us together in the first place.

Cheers buddy -- can't wait until Issue #100!

Clockwise from top left: pinup by Erik Larson, pinup by Walter Simonson, cover pencils by Peter Laird

Opposite page: pinup by Todd McFarlane

M'FARLANE
·92·



ERIC TALBOT

Ryan BROWN 92

JIM LAWSON

$2.00 USA/$2.75 CANADA ISSUE 51 SEPTEMBER 1992

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

PART TWO OF THIRTEEN

CITY AT WAR

MIRAGE PUBLISHING

#51

"THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE, SEEMINGLY RANDOM, NONETHELESS APPEAR TO BE PART OF AN ORGANIZED ATTEMPT..."

1

"...TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE CITY'S VAST CRIMINAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES."

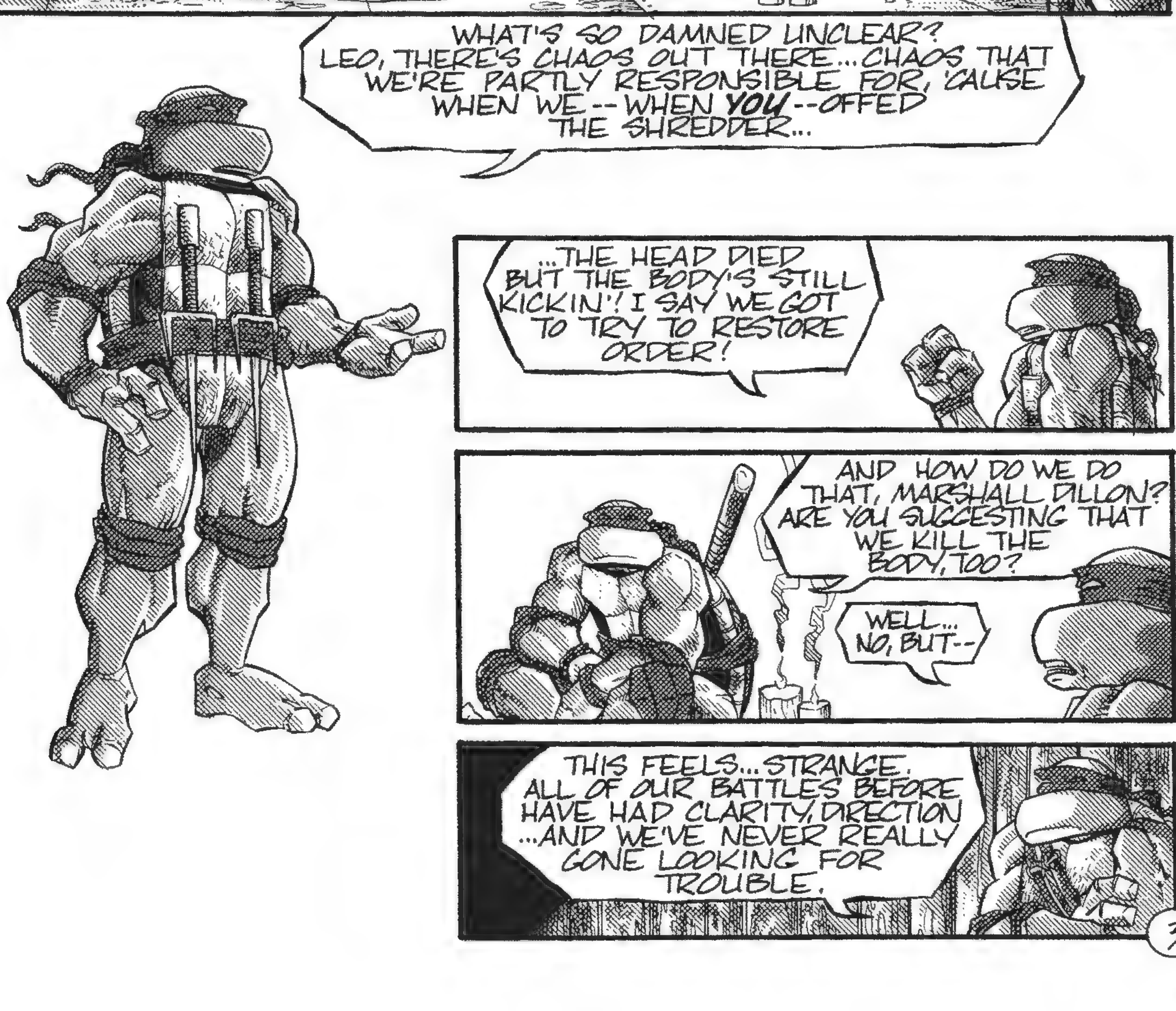
WHAT ELSE DOES IT SAY?

HMM...JUST THAT THE POLICE ARE RESPONDING WITH AN ORGANIZED CRIME TASK FORCE...BLAH, BLAH ...INCREASING STREET PATROLS...

DINKINS IS REASSURING THE CITIZENS, ETC., ETC. ...

SO... WHAT NOW, LEO?

I... DON'T KNOW...
THE DECISION TO COME BACK SEEMED SO RIGHT AT THE TIME... OUR PURPOSE SEEMED SO CLEAR...
NOW... I'M NOT SO SURE.
HUH?!


WHAT'S SO DAMNED UNCLEAR? LEO, THERE'S CHAOS OUT THERE... CHAOS THAT WE'RE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR, 'CAUSE WHEN WE -- WHEN YOU -- OFFED THE SHREDDER...
...THE HEAD DIED BUT THE BODY'S STILL KICKIN'! I SAY WE GOT TO TRY TO RESTORE ORDER!
AND HOW DO WE DO THAT, MARSHALL DILLON? ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT WE KILL THE BODY, TOO?
WELL... NO, BUT--
THIS FEELS... STRANGE. ALL OF OUR BATTLES BEFORE HAVE HAD CLARITY, DIRECTION ...AND WE'VE NEVER REALLY GONE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.
3

BUT LEO...

WHAT ABOUT WHEN WE FIRST FOUGHT THE SHREDDER?

THAT WAS DIFFERENT, MIKE...

WE HAD TO DO THAT ...FOR SPLINTER ...FOR... HONOR.

WELL, SPLINTER'S NOT HERE... AND MAYBE ITS TIME FOR US TO GROW UP AND MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS.

MEANING...?

JEEZ, LEO! WHAT THE HELL DID WE TRAIN ALL THOSE YEARS FOR? WE HAVE SKILLS--LET'S USE 'EM!

I SAY IT'S TIME TO KICK SOME FOOT BUTT!

THAT'S A LOT OF BUTT TO KICK, RAPH. WE'RE GOOD, TRUE... BUT, IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, THERE'S JUST FOUR OF US! THE FOOT...

...THEY'RE A FREAKIN' ***ARMY***!

BUT WHERE'S THE HONOR IN NOT TRYING, LEO...

WHERE?

COME ON...

WHERE ARE WE GOING, LEO?

OUT.

WE ALL NEED A LITTLE AIR.

4

HNGH...

ZzzZ

WHAZz... H-HUH?!!

OH, MAN... CAN'T KEEP DOZIN' OFF LIKE THAT... BETTER ROLL DOWN ALL THE WINDOWS ...GET SOME FRESH AIR...

HURST

BEEN DRIVIN' TWENTY HOURS STRAIGHT... NEED SOME REST SOON.

WONDER WHERE APRIL IS NOW...

APRIL...

HEY, APRIL...

5

THIS IS A GREAT PLACE YOU PICKED TO HIKE TO... YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE VALLEY FROM HERE.

I LIKE TO COME HERE AS OFTEN AS I CAN. IT'S SO QUIET...

...AND BEAUTIFUL.

YEAH...

...JUST LIKE YOU.

OH.

UM...

CASEY...

...DON'T

6

SMOOTH, JONES...REAL SMOOTH.

APRIL...

APRIL...?

...YOU UPSTAIRS?

HUH--?

ALL HER STUFF...

...SHE'S GONE.

DAMN!

RRR!

8

HHHOOOORRRNNK

WHAAOOH!

BIG BAT

SCREE

WOO...

GRAHAM'S GOODTIME GRILL

DAD APPROVED

GOTTA STOP... GET SOME GRUB... COFFEE...

GRAHAM'S

WELCOME

9

LATE NIGHT, HUH, COWBOY?

WHAT'LL YOU HAVE?

URMM...UH...THREE CHEESEBURGERS, FRIES, AND COFFEE.

UH...

...WHERE THE HELL AM I...

...EXACTLY?

GOAT HEAD, COLORADO.

DID YOU COME OVER THE ROCKIES?

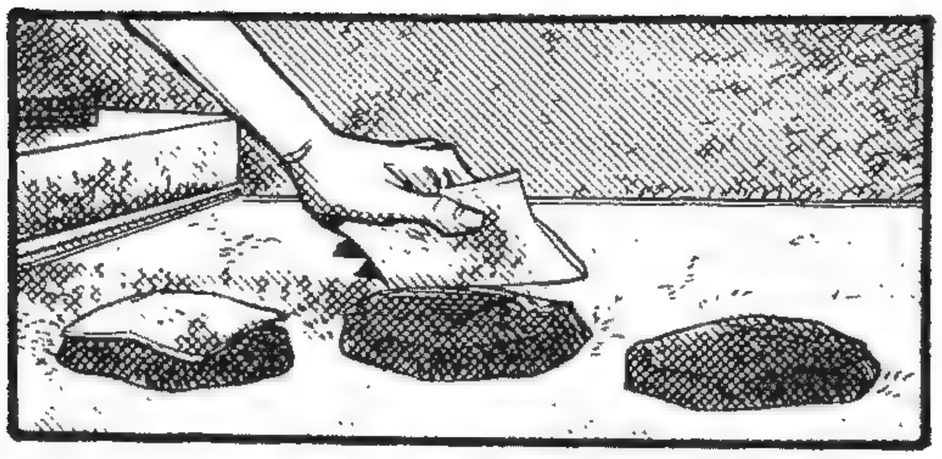
YEAH... COUPLE HOURS BACK.

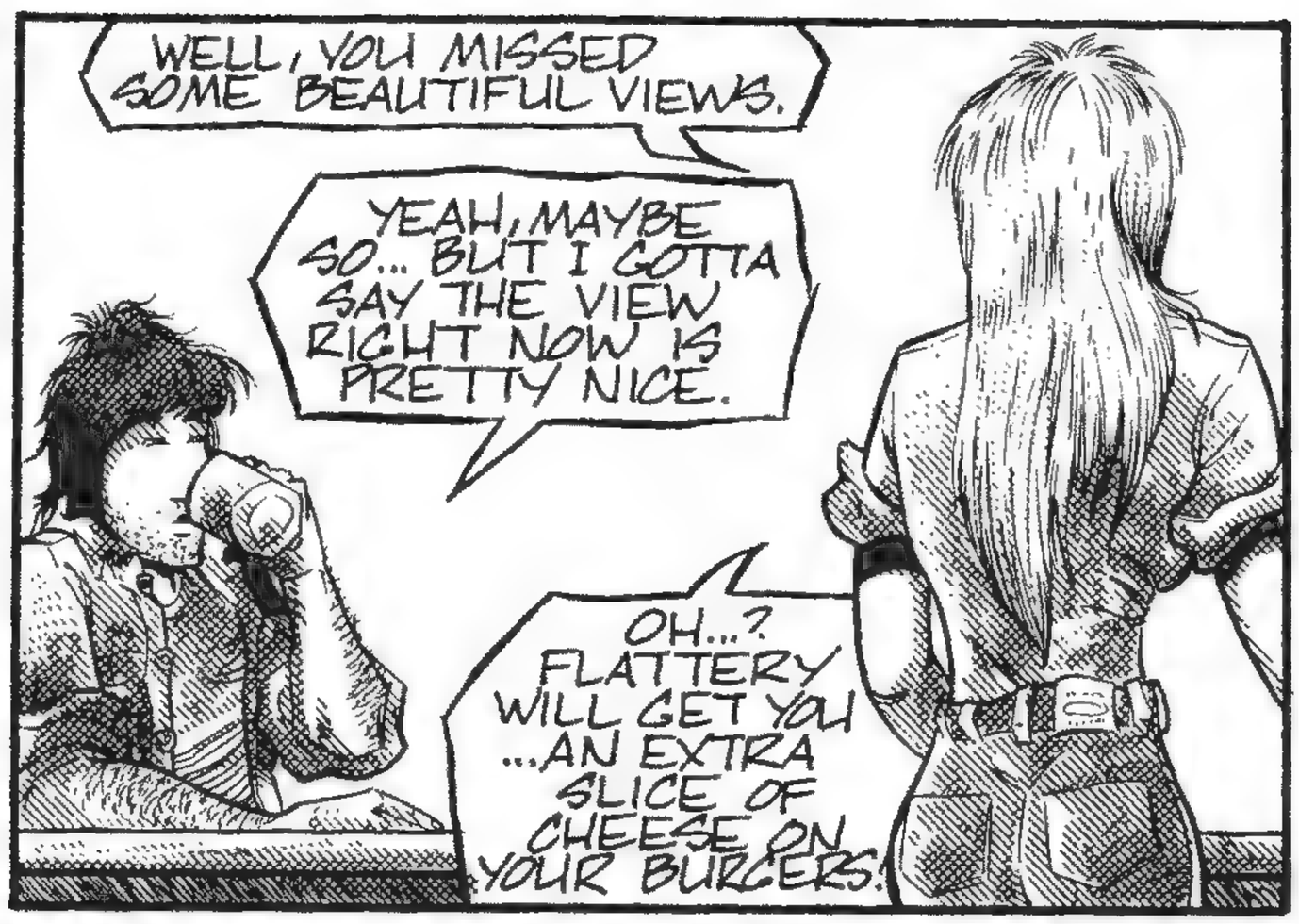
DID YOU SAY... GOATHEAD?

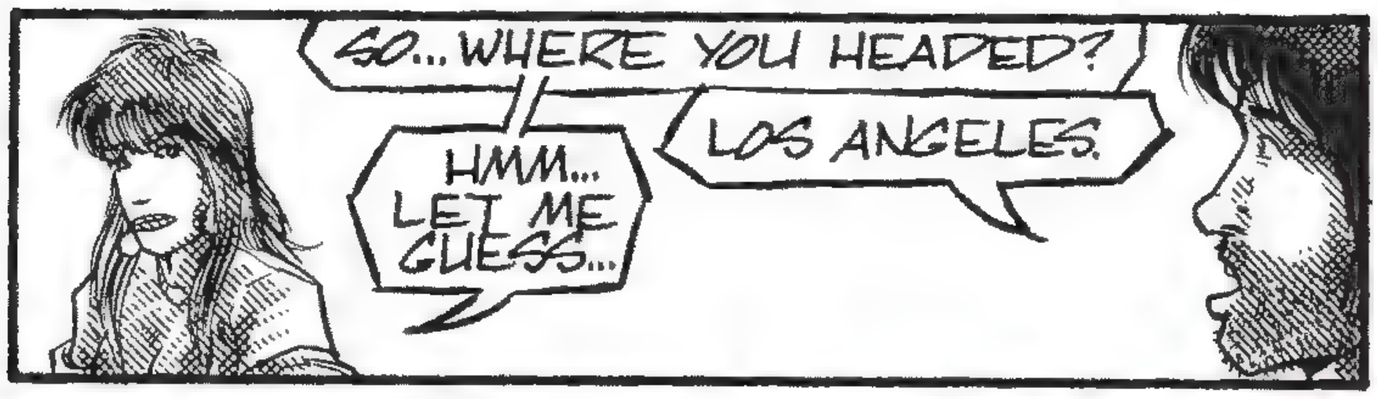
YEP. SO, YOU CAME OVER IN THE DARK, HUH? BIG MISTAKE...

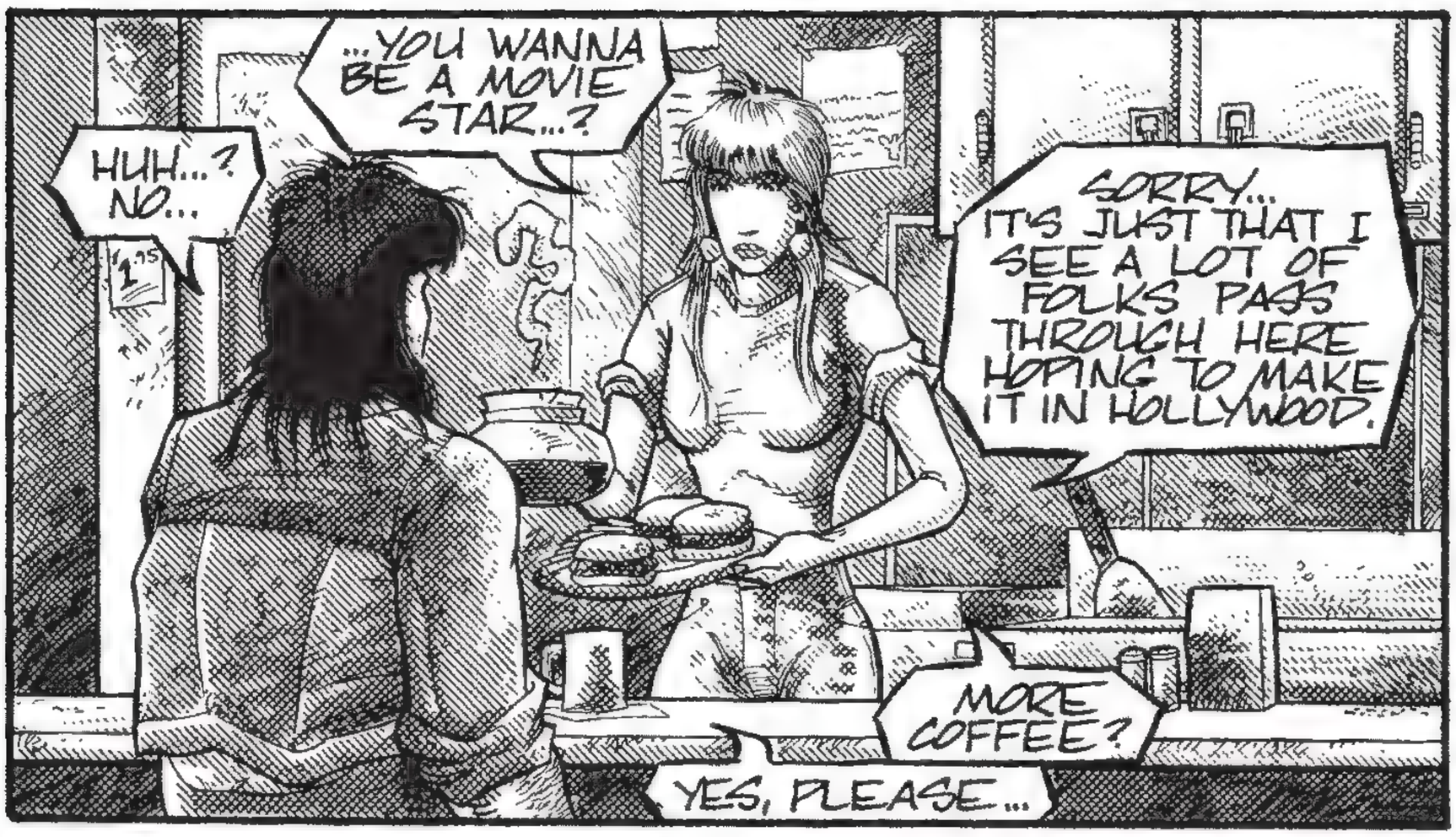
HOW SO?

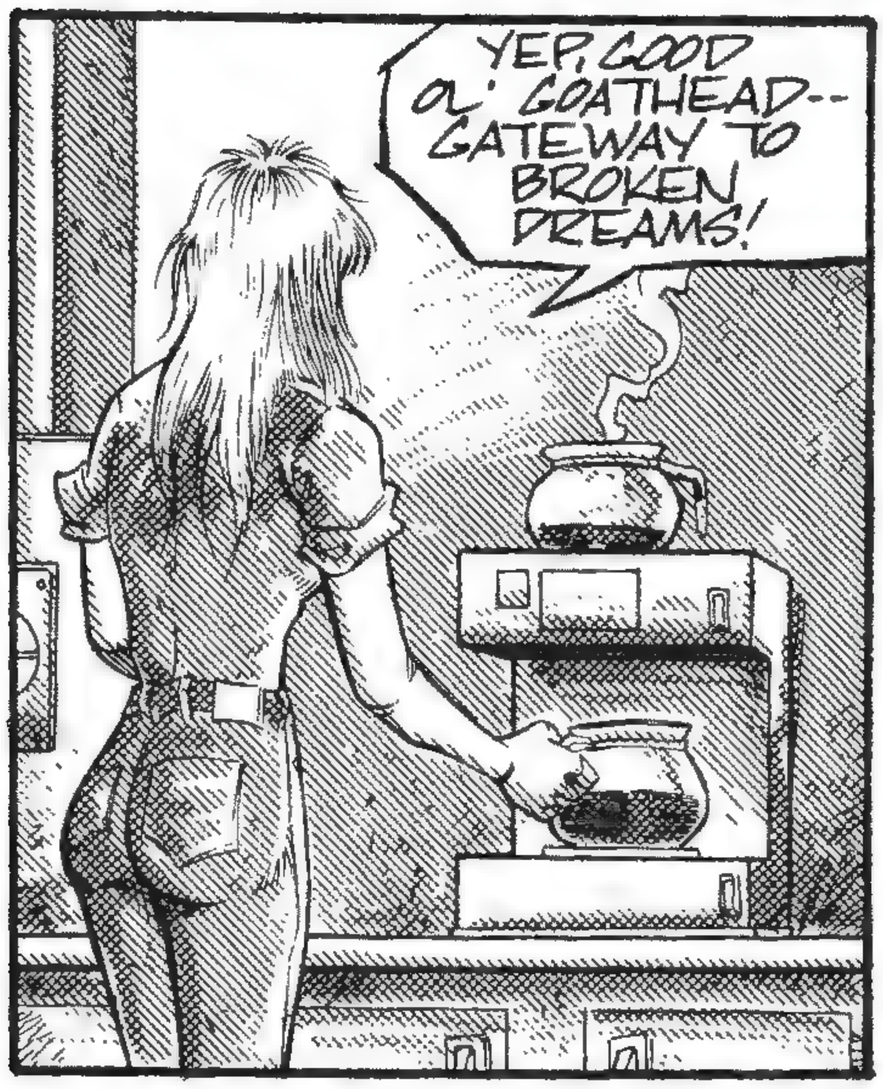
10




WELL, YOU MISSED SOME BEAUTIFUL VIEWS.
YEAH, MAYBE SO... BUT I GOTTA SAY THE VIEW RIGHT NOW IS PRETTY NICE.
OH...? FLATTERY WILL GET YOU ...AN EXTRA SLICE OF CHEESE ON YOUR BURGERS!


SO... WHERE YOU HEADED?
HMM... LET ME GUESS...
LOS ANGELES.


HUH...? NO...
...YOU WANNA BE A MOVIE STAR...?
SORRY... IT'S JUST THAT I SEE A LOT OF FOLKS PASS THROUGH HERE HOPING TO MAKE IT IN HOLLYWOOD.
MORE COFFEE?
YES, PLEASE...


YEP, GOOD OL' GOATHEAD-- GATEWAY TO BROKEN DREAMS!

YEAH... ...I KNOW ABOUT... DREAMS.

HEY, DREAMER!

APRIL? HEY, EARTH TO APRIL!

AH?

APRIL, SNAP OUT OF IT! YOU'VE BEEN TOTALLY DOWN SINCE YOU GOT TO LA. ...I PRACTICALLY HAD TO DRAG YOU OUT TONIGHT... WHATS GOING ON?

NOTHING... CAN WE GO, ROBYN?

GO? LEAVE?! WE JUST GOT HERE! APRIL, WHAT'S BUGGING YOU?

C'MON, YOU CAN TELL YOUR SISTER ...IS IT THAT GUY YOU WERE LIVING WITH?

CASEY?

YEAH... I GUESS... A LITTLE. BUT... IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE THINKING--WE WERE JUST... HOUSEMATES.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR OTHER HOUSEMATES... THOSE ITALIAN GUYS? YOU'VE HARDLY SAID ONE WORD ABOUT THEM.

UH... WELL... THEY WERE JUST... YOU KNOW ..SOME GUYS.

YEAH, AND YOU WERE THEIR LOVE SLAVE, RIGHT?

NO! COME ON, ROBYN... IT WAS NOTHING LIKE THAT...

12

WE WERE A FAMILY. SORT OF.

THEY WERE LIKE BROTHERS TO ME.

ALL OF THEM? EVEN CASEY?

APRIL, YOU WORRY ME...YOU USED TO BE SO HAPPY...!

ROBYN, I'M STILL HAPPY...

NO...YOU'RE KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME. THOSE GUYS YOU LIVED WITH, THEY DID SOMETHING TO MESS YOU UP.

I THINK-- UH-OH...

WHAT?

MAYBE WE SHOULD GO... THAT LEMANS WOMAN JUST WALKED IN... AND TROUBLE ALWAYS FOLLOWS HER FOOTSTERS...!

13

THIS PLACE WAS A SEX SHOP?
14

"MORPH'S ADULT NOVELTIES," ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER.

LOOKS LIKE A TOTAL LOSS...

WHY WOULD THE FOOT BLOW UP THIS PLACE?

WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT THEY DID... BUT IT FITS THE PATTERN.

I DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO LEARN ANYTHING HERE, LEO... WHERE TO NEXT?

THE "BRIDGE MASSACRE" SITE... I GOT THE ARTICLE FROM THE TIMES, WITH THE LOCATION.

WELL, LETS BEAT FEET!

15

NO MORE, THANKS... IF I HAD ANOTHER CUP, I COULD FLOAT TO L.A. ...

HAHAHA! YOU'RE FUNNY, CASEY!

WELL, THANKS FOR THE GOOD GRUB... I GOTTA GET BACK ON THE ROAD.

DRIVE CAREFULLY... AND IF YOU EVER COME THROUGH HERE AGAIN, STOP IN!

YOU CAN BET ON IT, GABRIELLE. 'BYE!

GRILL

GRAHA

HEY, MISTER... NICE CAR!

HUH? THANKS...

YEAH, REAL NICE... HOW 'BOUT LETTIN' US TAKE IT FOR A LITTLE RIDE?

I GOT A BETTER IDEA... HOW ABOUT IF YOU GOOBERS JUST PISS OFF!!!

WHUMP

BAF

GUNCH!

17

BAP

KREK

WHUK

SEE... WHAT HAPPENS... TO DORKS FROM MASSACHUSETTS ...WHO INSULT US...?

YEAH... THAT'LL TEACH YA...

UNGH...

HEY, ARN... GOT HIS KEYS... LET'S GO GET SOME BREWSKIS AND HAVE A PARTY!

HOT DAMN!

YEE-HAH!

BWAAAH

CASEY!!! ARE YOU OKAY?!

UHNH... YEAH...

THEY TOOK YOUR CAR...?

YEAH... AND ALL MY STUFF WITH IT...

GOD, THEY REALLY MESSED YOU UP, DIDN'T THEY?

C'MON, I'LL TAKE YOU TO MY PLACE SO YOU CAN GET CLEANED UP...

THIS IS IT?

YEP...THREE DAYS AGO... TWENTY-SEVEN BODIES HERE, PLUS ONE ON A ROOFTOP FOUR BLOCKS AWAY...

...ALL WEARING, ACCORDING TO THE TIMES, "STRANGE NINJA-LIKE UNIFORMS."

LEO, THIS IS GETTING REALLY WEIRD...

WHAT WOULD TWENTY-SEVEN FOOT SOLDIERS BE DOING HERE, UNDER THIS BRIDGE... AND WHAT COULD HAVE KILLED THEM ALL WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE?.

I'M FORMING A THEORY ABOUT THAT, DON... AND IT'S NOT PRETTY.

YEAH, WELL, BE SURE TO LET US IN ON IT SOMEDAY, LEO...

IN THE MEANTIME, THIS TRAIL IS DEAD COLD...LET'S HAUL SHELL BACK TO THE HIDEOUT!

RAPH'S RIGHT...C'MON, LET'S GO...I FEEL TOO EXPOSED OUT HERE.

WELL, DID YOU HAVE FUN?

YES, ROBYN, I DID.

SO... WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TOMORROW?

HMM... HOW ABOUT CLEANING YOUR HOUSE?

HAHA. I MEANT SOMETHING FUN.

MMM... MAYBE THE BEACH...?

HEY, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, APRIL! WE'LL GRAB OUR BEST SUITS AND BREAK SOME HEARTS!

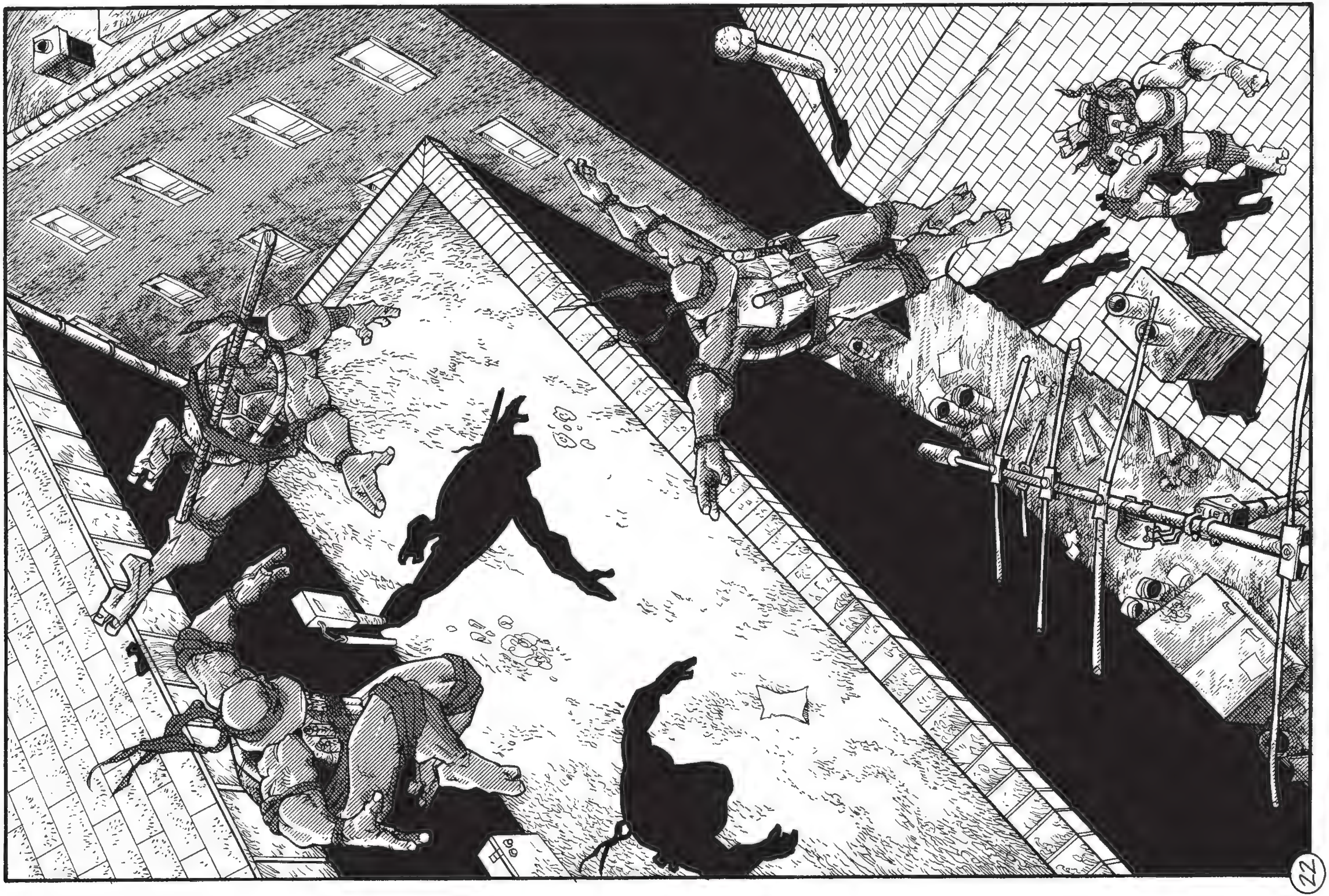
YEAH... ME, TOO.

Y'KNOW, IT'S ODD... I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN SO LONG--AND NOW YOU'RE OUT HERE ***LIVING*** WITH ME.

YEAH, I KNOW... IT'S MY FAULT FOR NOT KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOU MORE...

NO, NO, I'M NOT COMPLAINING, I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

21



HEY... DID YOU HEAR THAT?

IT CAME FROM DOWN THERE... STAY SHARP--!

EZ PARKING

SHOULD WE ROUGH 'EM UP, LEO?

RAPH...

PUT A SOCK IN IT, OKAY?

THIS REALLY SUCKS...

DONNIE! --SUCH LANGUAGE!

I MEAN IT, MIKE... HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO WANDER AROUND HOPING TO RUN INTO THE FOOT...

...WHEN WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A PLAN FOR WHAT TO DO WHEN THAT HAPPENS?

PLUS, THIRTY SECONDS AGO, WE WERE READY TO JUMP ALL OVER SOME KIDS PLAYING WITH GARBAGE CANS... WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOING?

LET'S FACE IT, GUYS...

23

...WE'VE BEEN REDUCED TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH!

24

END

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

I can't say enough about the A.C. Farley covers for this and the next eleven issues. He really had a knack for getting a lot of emotion out of so few lines. This "Neighborhood Watch" composition is simply genius. Love his chunky TMNT style—still my own personal favorite way of drawing them. Chunky, like they would be impossible to knock over if their feet were planted, and if they hit you, one punch would be lights out and then some.

Pages 2–3: The guys living in the water tower was a no-brainer, and one of my favorite ideas for a temp home when we were trying to figure out where to put them when they first land back in the city. It's so classically, iconic NY—especially with its inspirational roots in Frank Miller's *Daredevil*.

Page 6: Casey putting the moves on April, and her leaving right after, felt as powerful as when Splinter told her to leave when she asked what she should do. Really puts things in motion, and keeps it on high.

Page 9: A cool inside joke, one of many that we always liked to have in all the TMNT comics we did. This one, "Graham's Goodtime Grill"— where Casey stops while he's on the road to go find April in California—is named after Jim Lawson's first born son, Graham. Thus you have the "Dad Approved" label in the upper top right of the sign.

Page 13: We also used to always draw in caricatures of many of our friends and the guys in the studio, but I think if you look at the bottom of page 13 you'll see two guys that look a lot like Steve Lavigne and Eric Talbot at the bar in LA with April and her sister, Robyn. But they also look like the same guys that attack Casey in the diner parking lot on pages 16–17. Funny.

Page 24: I really like how this whole issue came together. It features a lot of really strong Jim Lawson layouts. He always was very distinctive in his style and choices, and stayed very consistently so. Good draftsman and a solid storyteller.

PETER LAIRD

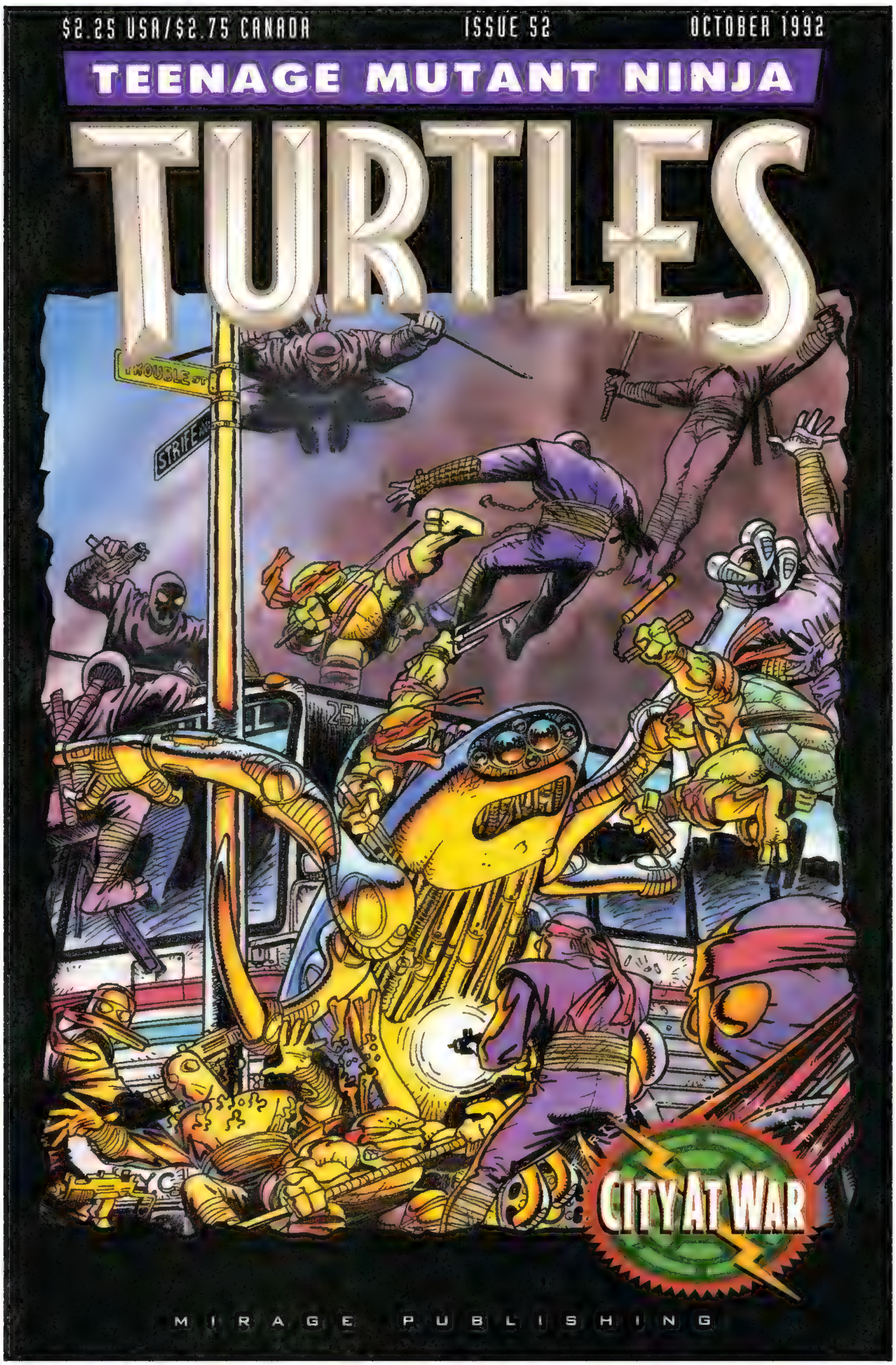
Pages 1–4: It was fun to play around in these pages with the whole notion of what the Turtles' purpose was… something that comes full circle in the last few pages of this issue, where they realize they've been "reduced to the neighborhood watch."

…THE HEAD DIED BUT THE BODY'S STILL KICKIN'! I SAY WE GOT TO TRY TO RESTORE ORDER!
AND HOW DO WE DO THAT, MARSHALL DILLON? ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT WE KILL THE BODY, TOO?
WELL… NO, BUT--
THIS FEELS…STRANGE. ALL OF OUR BATTLES BEFORE HAVE HAD CLARITY, DIRECTION …AND WE'VE NEVER REALLY GONE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.
3

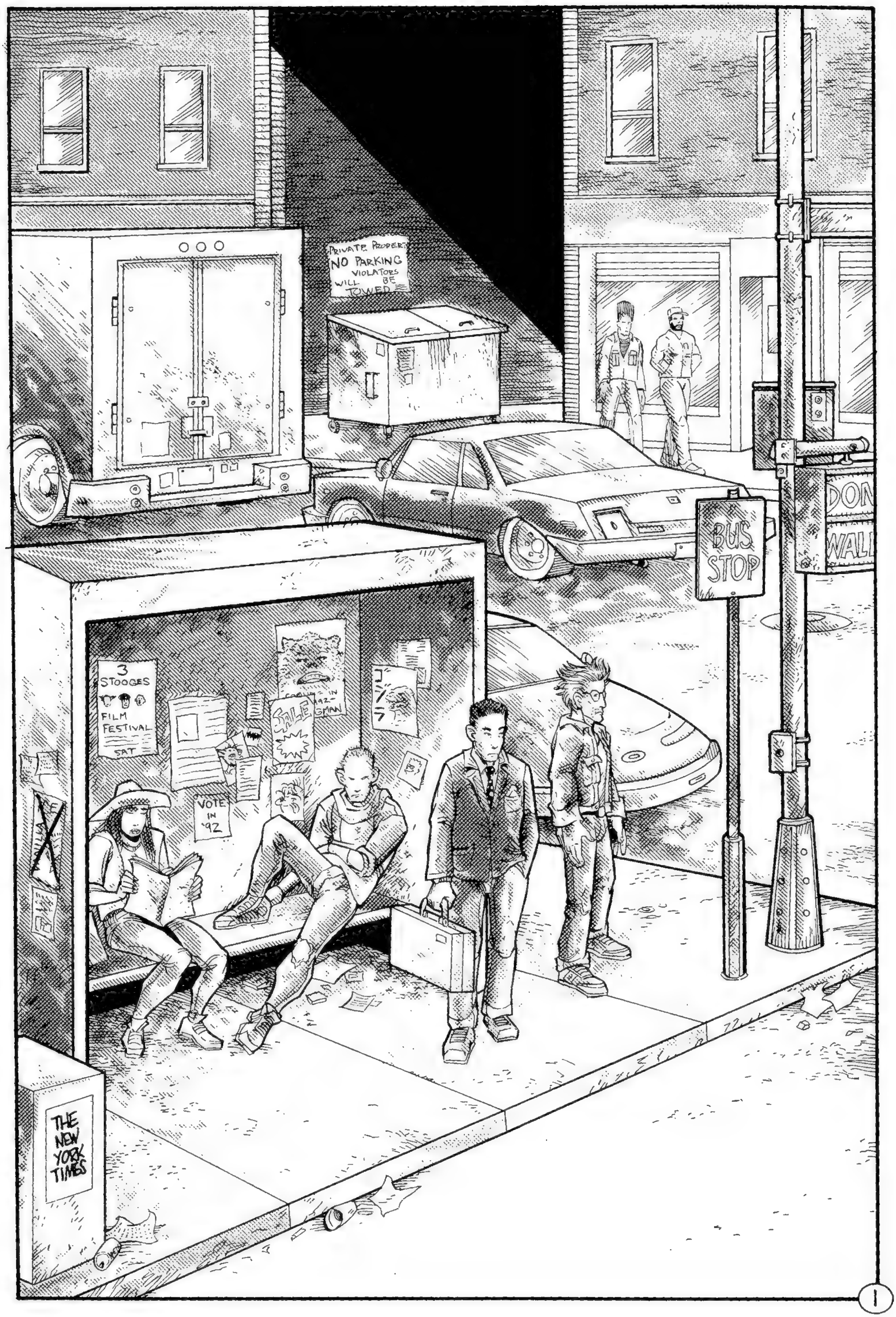
Much of this issue is taken up with getting various characters started on their particular parts of this story arc—April staying in California with her sister, Casey beginning to drive out to find her but getting waylaid in Goathead, Colorado, and one cryptic panel on page 4 of Splinter in solitary meditation.

Pages 12–13: I get a kick out of April trying to avoid saying too much to her sister about her housemates—"those Italian guys," as her sister puts it. And on the following page, Jim Lawson slips in a reference to his character "Guzzi LeMans." In fact, I think that's her standing in the middle of the page.

ROBYN, I'M STILL HAPPY…
NO…YOU'RE KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME. THOSE GUYS YOU LIVED WITH, THEY DID SOMETHING TO MESS YOU UP.
I THINK-- UH-OH…
WHAT?
MAYBE W GO… THAT WOMAN JU IN… AND ALWAYS HER FO


$2.25 USA/$2.75 CANADA
ISSUE 52
OCTOBER 1992
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
TROUBLE ST.
STRIFE AVE.
CITY AT WAR
MIRAGE PUBLISHING

#52


PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO PARKING
VIOLATORS
WILL BE
TOWED
BUS
STOP
3
STOOGES
FILM
FESTIVAL
SAT
VOTE
IN
'92
THE
NEW
YORK
TIMES

MORNING...

GOOD MORNING, CASEY...WOW, YOU LOOK LIKE HELL!

THANKS... NOW I FEEL LIKE HELL, TOO.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

'BOUT ELEVEN. WANT SOME COFFEE?

YEAH, THAT'D BE GREAT...

BREAKFAST, TOO? GOT SOME WAFFLES IN THE 'FRIDGE...

2

UH... NO, THANKS... MY JAW'S NOT UP TO EATIN' YET!

OW...

ARE YOU PLANNING TO CALL THE COPS TODAY?

HUH?

YOU KNOW, ABOUT YOUR CAR...

YEAH... I GUESS...

WELL, I GOTTA GO AND EARN MY DAILY BREAD...

UMM...

YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY TODAY... REST UP BEFORE YOU LEAVE...

WELL... MAYBE I'LL SEE YA LATER THEN... 'BYE!

HEY, THANKS... MAYBE I'LL TAKE YOU UP ON THAT...

OTA

GOAT HEAD POLICE... MAY I HELP YOU?

YEAH... UH... I'D LIKE TO REPORT... A... UM...

REPORT A WHAT, SIR... SIR? HELLO?

CLICK

POLICE

4

8.2%
THE NEW YORK TIMES
ELVIS SIGHTINGS CONTINUE
I ♥ LA
GANG WAR ESCAL
VICTIMS OF LATEST BIZARRE KILLING SPREE SAID TO BE MEMBERS OF SECRET "CULT" GANG CALLED "THE FEET"
Police cordoned off several blocks near the Roland Memorial Bridge
are no suspects in the killings, though the police investigation continues. Police have set up
OH, NO...
6

HAH!

GLORT

C'MON, APRIL... SHAKE IT!

WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!

W-WAIT...

...THE OLD WALK-IN COOLER--THERE'S A HOLE IN THE WALL WHERE THE COOLING UNIT WAS REMOVED--!

HEY, GUYS-- WE'RE OUTTA HERE!

NO PROB!

DEFINITELY!

KRUK

7

HEY!

APRIL!!

HEY!
EARTH TO APRIL...!

THERE...THERE'S A HOLE... IN THE WALL...

STORM WARNING
GANG WAR ESCALATE
PLATYPUS CAFE OPENS
PINK'S HUNTING DOES

WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU BEEN DAYDREAMING ABOUT?

C'MON. THERE'S A BIG SALE AT MR. CHET'S --WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU SOME **MODERN** CLOTHES!

CLOTHES? I--

--AND I'M **STARVED!**

HOW DOES MACROBIOTIC MEXICAN SOUND?

IMPOSSIBLE, ACTUALLY...

WELL, LET'S GO!

CLICK

I ♥ LA

HMM DO DE DO... UNDER THE SEA, UNDER THE SEA...

CASEY! -- YOU'RE STILL HERE...?

HEY, DON'T SOUND SO SURPRISED!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HOME?

GRAHAM GAVE ME AN HOUR OFF... I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE DINER BY TWO...

WELL, DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT SHARING THIS TUNA SURPRISE I WHIPPED UP!

UH, OKAY.

BOY, THE TRAILER SURE LOOKS ...CLEAN!

YEAH... I DID THE DISHES, VACUUMED, STRAIGHTENED UP A BIT... HERE YA GO ...A C.J. SPECIAL!

OBOY... LOOKS... UM ...FILLING!

9

?!

AAAAARGHH!

DAMN!

SMASH

THAT WAS PRETTY GOOD. THIS GUY SPLINTER YOU WERE TELLING ME ABOUT--HE TEACH YOU HOW TO MAKE THIS?

NAH... WE NEVER LET HIM COOK...

...HE'D ALWAYS GET HAIR IN THE FOOD. I PICKED UP THIS RECIPE FROM APRIL, MY... UM... SISTER.

YOU MISS YOUR FAMILY, HUH, CASEY...

YEAH, I GUESS... YEAH...

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME, CASEY JONES?

UH...

I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW... WHEN YOU'RE READY ...IF YOU'RE READY... TO TELL ME...

...I'LL BE HERE.

UNTIL THEN...

...I'D LIKE IT IF YOU'D STAY.

PIP
PEEP
POO
POO

CLICK

TICKA

CON EDISON
NEW YORK POWER GRID
825330008144

PASSWORD ACCEPTED
FILE ACCESSED □

ACCOUNT NO. 227900-41107234-002 BILLING STATUS □

ACCOUNT CURRENT THRU 9-31-92 □

TICKA
TICKA

TACK TIK TIKKA

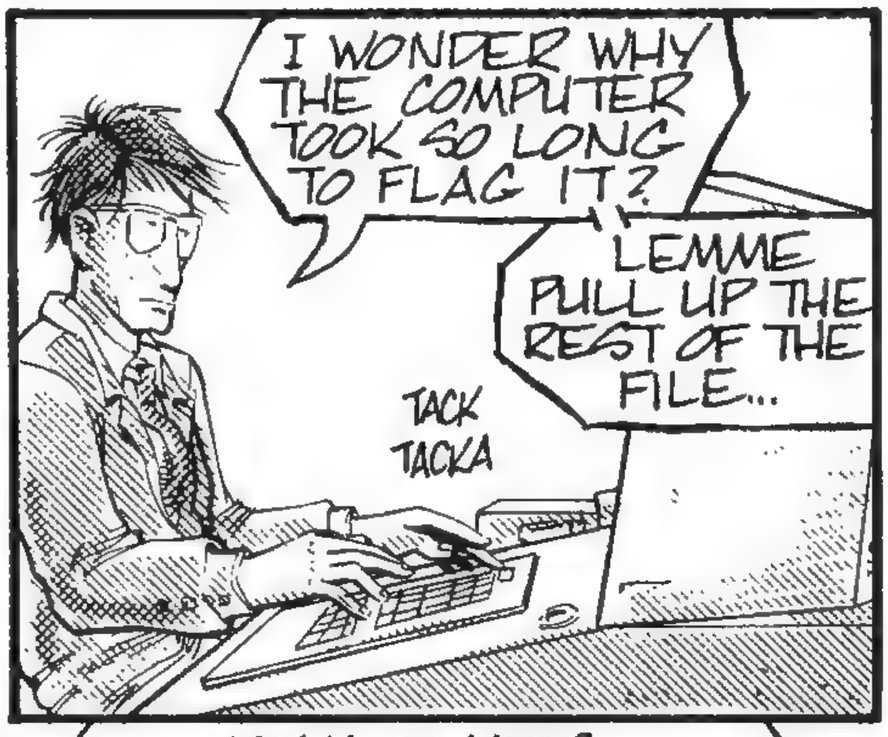
ACCOUNT PAST DUE 2-31-92 BLUE FLAG □

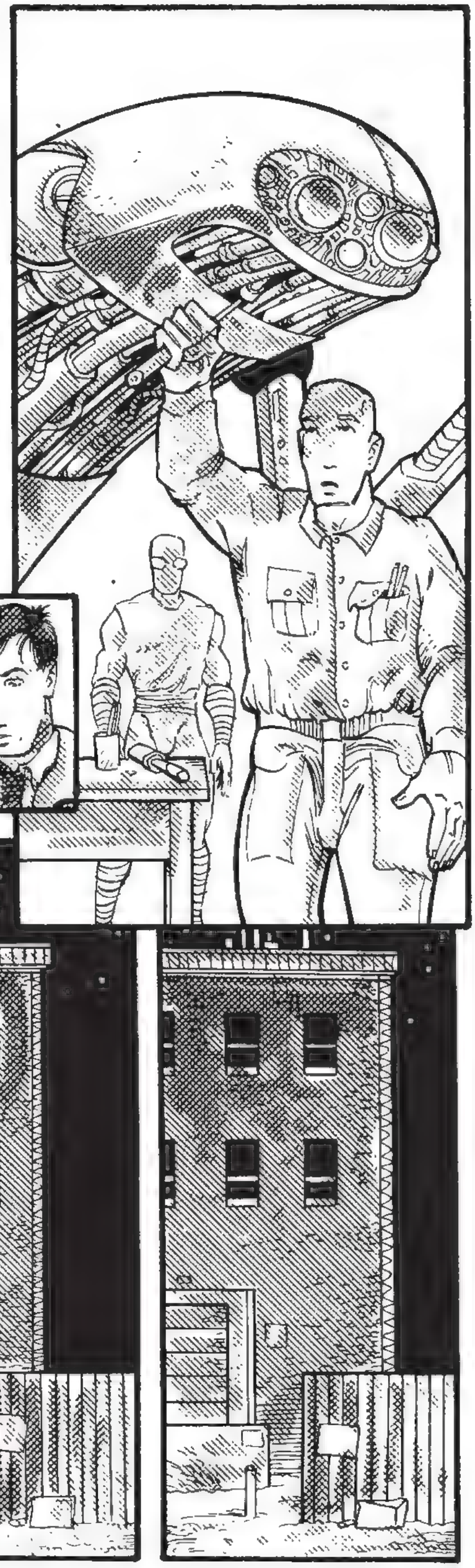
CLICK

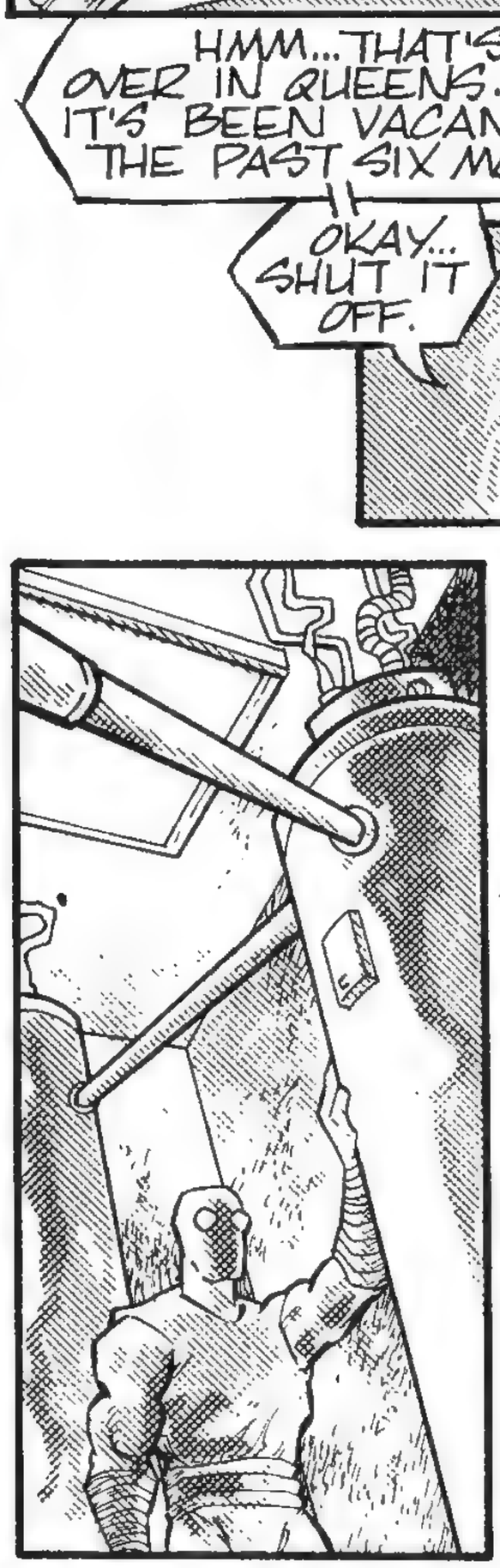
13

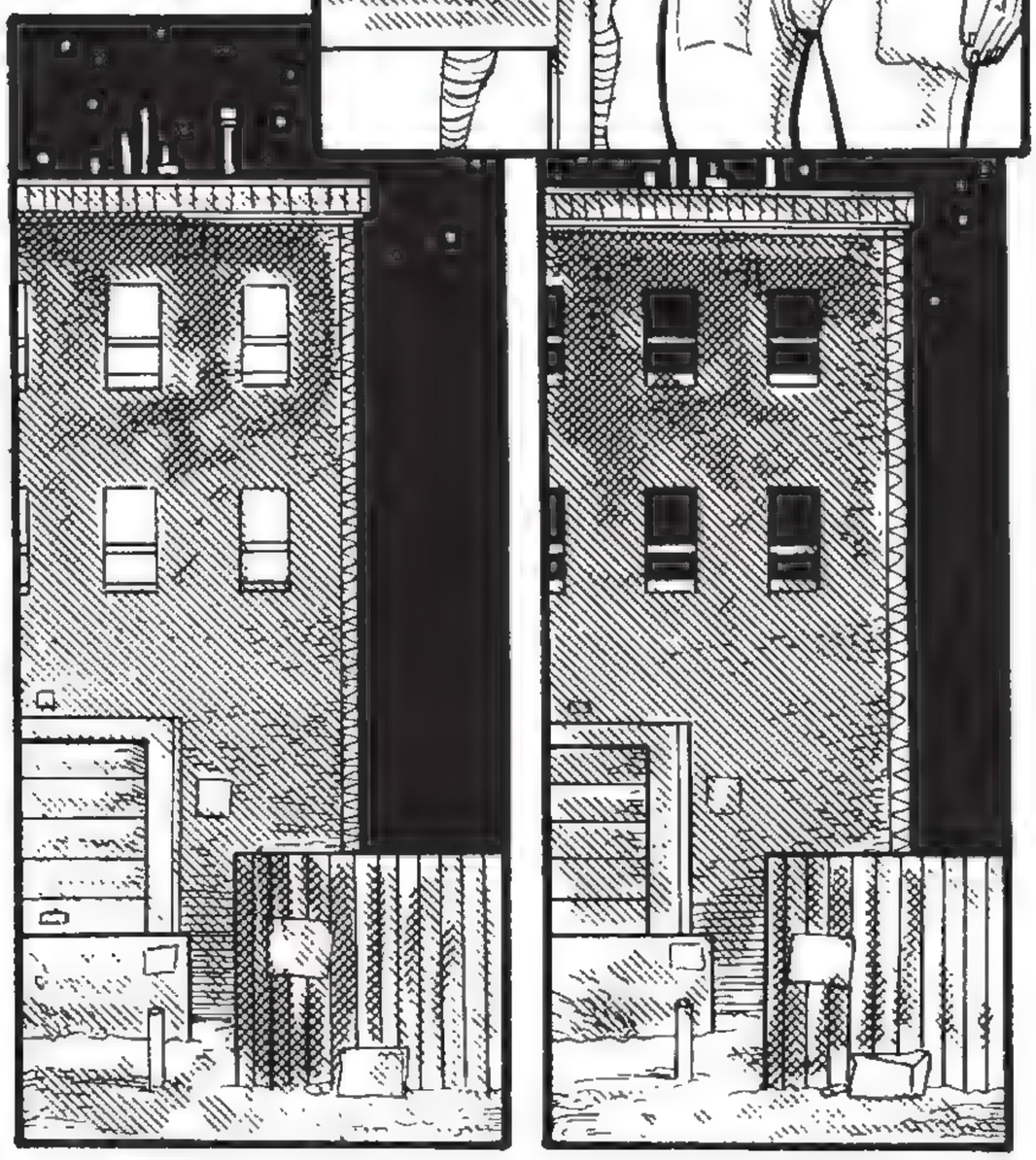
HEY, LOU...
I JUST GOT A BLUE FLAG ON THIS ACCOUNT...
KIN
UTS

LET'S SEE...
JEEZ! SEVEN MONTHS OVERDUE!


I WONDER WHY THE COMPUTER TOOK SO LONG TO FLAG IT?
LEMME PULL UP THE REST OF THE FILE...
TACK TACKA




HMM... THAT'S OVER IN QUEENS... SAYS IT'S BEEN VACANT FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS.
OKAY... SHUT IT OFF.



TOKYO, JAPAN

THE REPORTS ARE SKETCHY, BUT THEY SEEM TO BACK UP WHAT WE HAD ASSUMED TO BE TRUE...

...THE WAR AMONG THE FACTIONS CONTINUES TO ESCALATE. OUR UNITS ARE NEARLY ALL IN PLACE, AND THE SOFTWARE HAS ALMOST COMPLETED BETA TEST PHASE.

IT IS A PITY TO ALLOW THE SITUATION TO DEGENERATE TO THIS DEGREE--

IT WAS TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO WAIT.

IN CHAOS THERE IS WEAKNESS.

C'MON, MAN... YOUR MONEY! OR ELSE...

WHAT TH--!

YAAAH!

KOPF

WHUK

BLAM BLAM

KEEP PRACTICING, PALLY...

...PRETTY SOON YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HIT THE BROAD SIDE OF A BARN!

SPAK

SPAKO

BAMPF

WHUMPA

16

AW, MAN...

WHAT'S WITH YOU?

THIS "GUARDIAN ANGEL" GIG, THAT'S WHAT...

...THIS IS *STUPID*! WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH THE FOOT?

WE MIGHT AS WELL BE BACK IN NOHO PICKIN' DANDELIONS...

POST NO BILLS

WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO...LET THOSE PEOPLE GET MUGGED?!

THAT AIN'T OUR PROBLEM, LEO...

WE DIDN'T COME BACK TO NEW YORK FOR THIS SMALL STUFF... WE'RE HERE TO... TO... UM...

OH, HELL... I DON'T EVEN CARE ANY MORE.

RAPH... SPLINTER TAUGHT US THAT SOME-TIMES THE PATH TO THE CORRECT ACTION IS EVOLUTIONARY...

CARDS

...I THINK WE JUST NEED TO GIVE OUR-SELVES SOME TIME...

...AND OUR PATH WILL BE REVEALED.

CHK

COULD YA KEEP THE ZEN CRAP TO YOURSELF FOR NOW, LEO?

WE DON'T ALL HAVE YOUR FREAKIN' BUDDHA NATURE, YA KNOW... SOME OF US ACTUALLY **ENJOY** LINEAR THOUGHT!

LIKE ME... IF I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHOSE BUTT I'M SUPPOSED TO KICK SOON, I'M JUST GONNA--

10

--BUST.

OBOY.

ALL RIGHT!

ES PHARMAC

SON OPT

KK

KKK

SREEUNCH

KK

REAR

BE TOWED

CHET'S

EAT WELL O!

GRAND OPENING RASTRON CAFE!

CARPE DIEM

THE NEW YORK TIMES

KKREEK

20

YAHOO!

LET'S DO IT!

21

CHK

22

23

24
25

UNGH!

GO DOWN... YOU... SUCKHEAD!

CHORK

BZZT K

BZZT KK

HAH! YOU'RE TERMINATED, BUD!

CRASH

NOW WHAT?

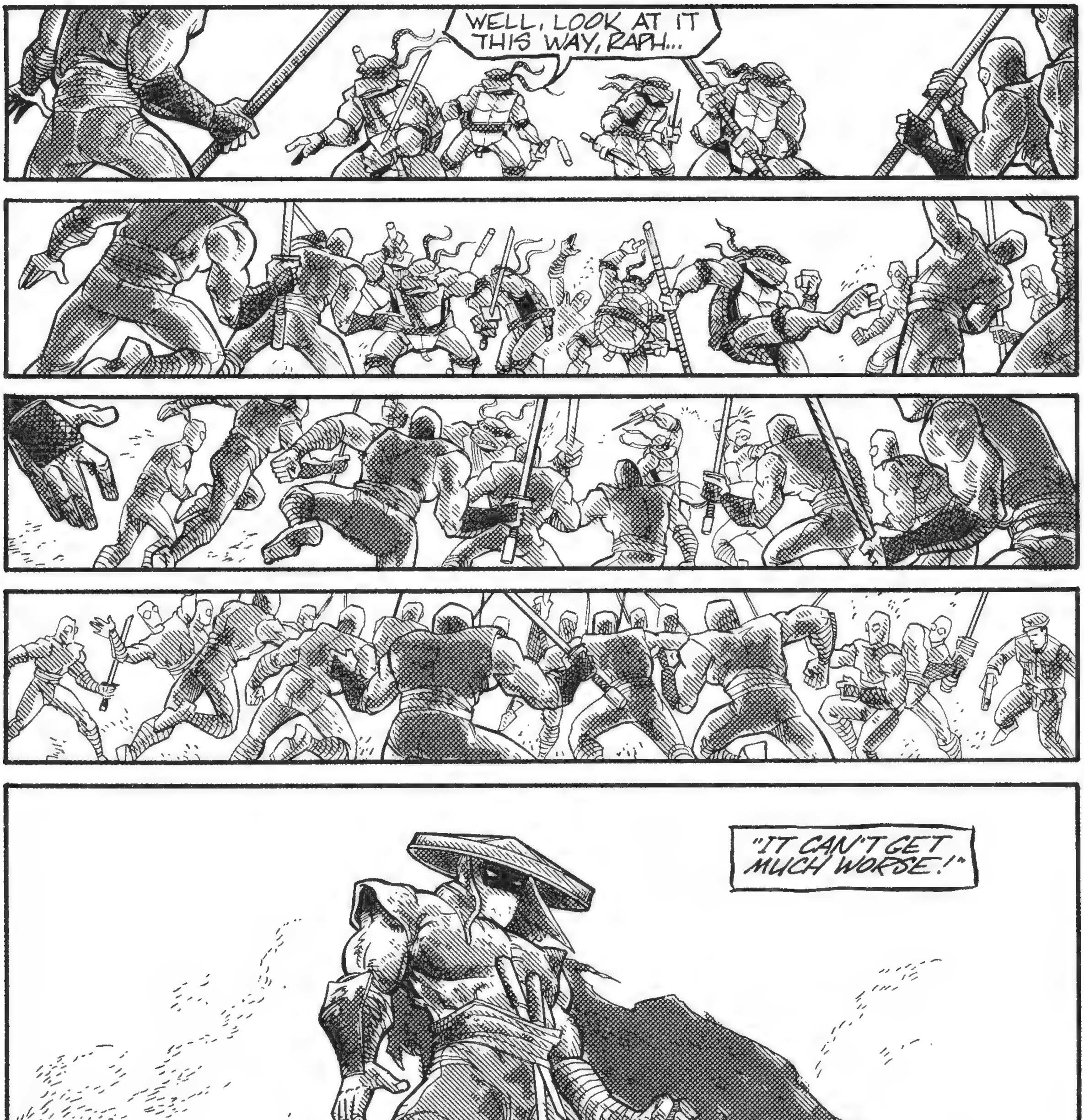
ON YOUR TOES, GUYS--WE'VE FOUND THE FOOT!

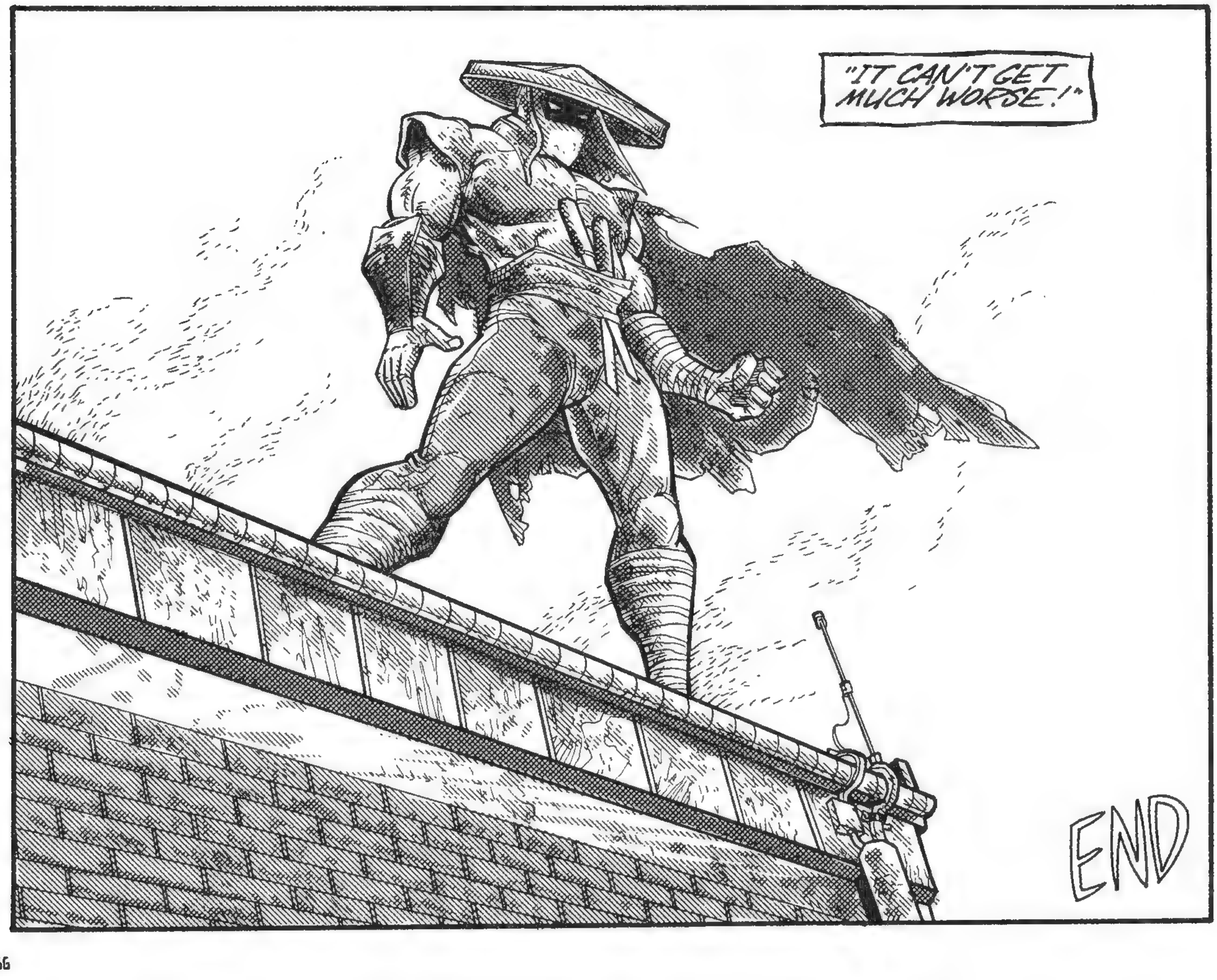
AND THAT'S NOT ALL, LEO...!

WHATTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT THIS IS!

POLICE

27


WELL, LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, RAPH...


"IT CAN'T GET MUCH WORSE!"
END

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

Of several things I liked about getting to issue #52, one was watching the relationship between Casey and Gabrielle start to grow. I had always liked the idea we had here, and the way it was sketched out over the series—but when you actually start to see it come together, well, it's exciting. I think we never imagined a "Casey" without an "April," so it was awesome to go there, here.

Page 4: Casey hanging up when he was calling the police about his stolen car was also a very cool beat for me. I liked the symbolism and thought behind, "Well, maybe it is time to let his car, and all his possessions, along with his memories within… go."

Pages 6–8: The flashback to the time when April and the Turtles got attacked in her apartment and the "Second Time Around" shop was a really great touch/connection to the past. It was always one of my favorite emotional moments from the original eleven issue run—April and the Turtles on a nearby roof, her crying as the shop burned. It bonded them forever back then, and was a great way to establish their importance to her now, even three thousand miles away. You can't run from your feelings.

Page 15: Karai's first appearance and the quote "In chaos there is weakness" is a classic Peter Laird line, but also a great way to introduce the new face of the Foot—and a female no less. I love that this character is still an important part of the TMNT family legacy, still consistently used today.

Pages 20–26: Robots! Robots! And more ROBOTS! I love it! I always thought Peter created and drew awesome machinery that looked like it could work (think the "Mousers" from back in *TMNT* issue #2, or the "Transmat" device from *TMNT* #4…and say no more! Heh!) and he certainly didn't miss a beat with "Foot Mauler," used here to attack the "Foot Accountant" on the bus.

Pages 24–25: It was great to see the "Street Fight" spread again. I had forgotten about pages 24–25—I don't know how many people picked up on it at the time it was on the stands, but it is clear to the trained eye that it is Peter Laird inks over Jim Lawson's pencils.

Page 27: I also love Raph and Leo's reaction to finally seeing something they can really sink their teeth into. Even more to see where it ends up this issue when all hell breaks loose! Classic quote from the Thing from the Fantastic Four here, "Whatta revoltin' development this is!"

PETER LAIRD

I love this Craig Farley cover, in part because I get to see how he draws the Foot robot I designed. Typical of Craig's work, it has a powerful composition, great attention to detail, and beautiful color. What more could you ask for?

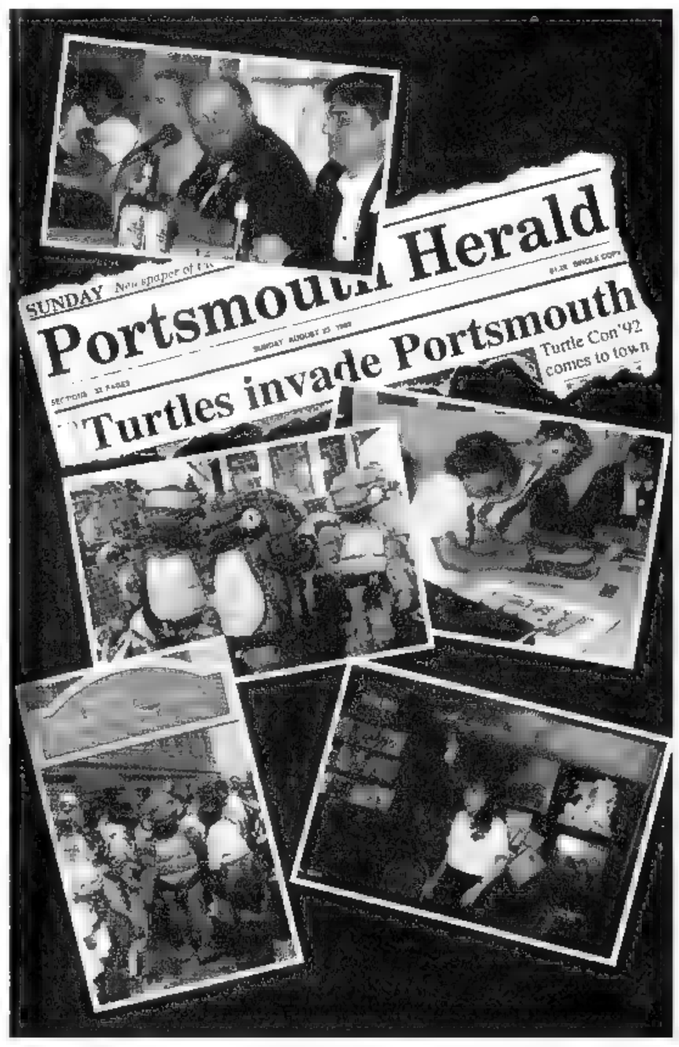
In this issue we begin to see how the various factions of the shattered Foot are in conflict with each other, seeking dominance. And Casey is getting closer to Gabrielle, the waitress he met in Goathead, Colorado. (I love the line on page 11 where, after eating a lunch Casey has prepared for her, Gabrielle is asking him about Splinter and Casey replies "Nah, we'd never let him cook… he'd always get hair in the food.")

Page 10: A beautifully-drawn page—one of Jim's best, in my opinion. It's unusual to see Splinter losing his cool… and this foreshadows events later on.

Pages 12–13: It's fun to note the somewhat dated technology used by one of the Foot accountants to hack into the ConEd systems. If we'd waited 20 years to do this issue, he'd probably just use an iPhone.

Page 15: I believe this page has the very first appearance of Karai, in the last panel.

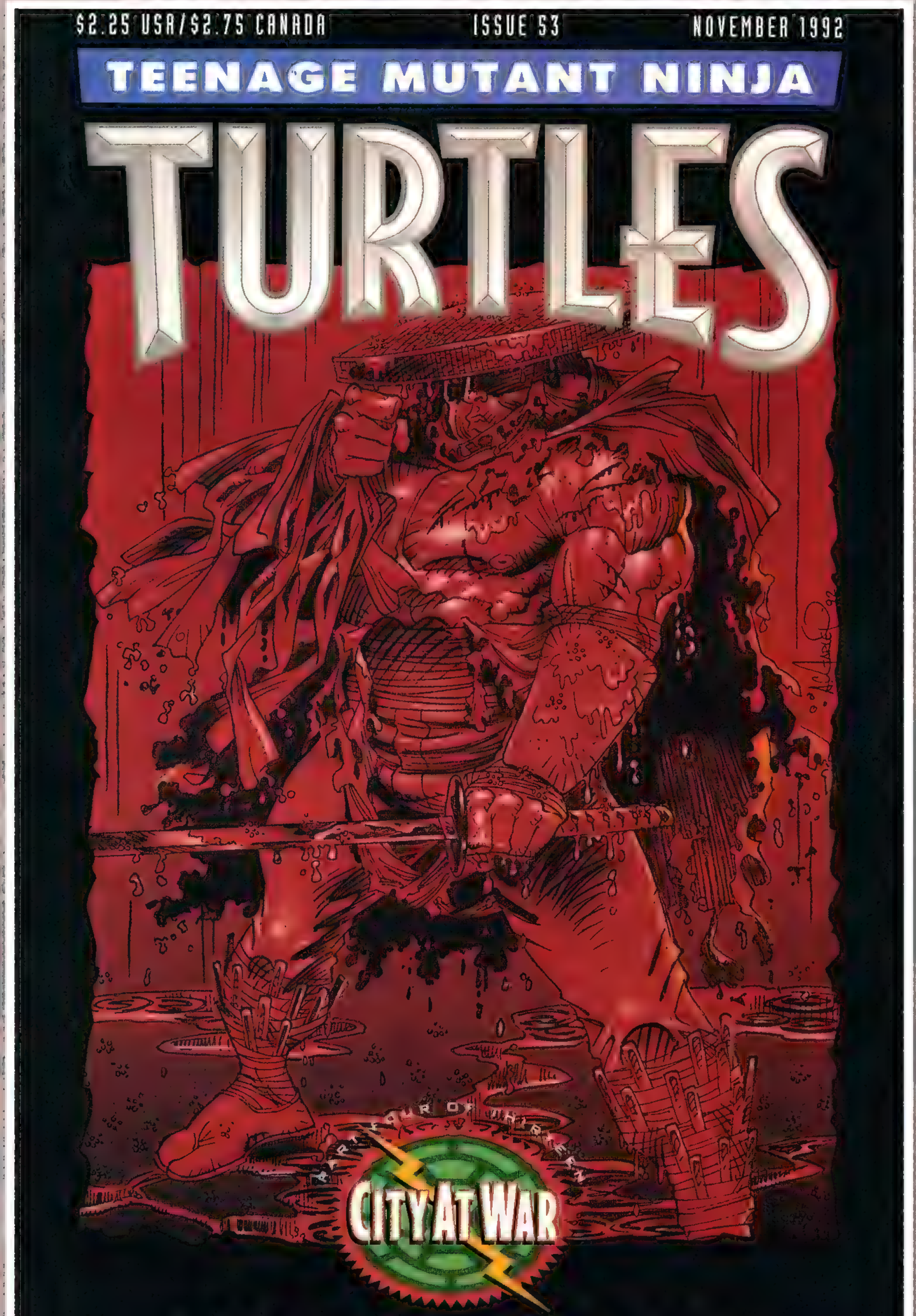
Page 19: I love the way Jim drew these scenes with the robot that I designed. I do wonder if it was clear enough to readers that the reason it is attacking this bus is that the Foot tech division (one of the several factions fighting for control of the clan in NYC) had located the Foot accountant on that bus (the one who had shut down power to one of the Foot tech division's locations), and had sent the robot after him. (I know, not the most stealthy way to do it… but it looked cool!)



Page 20: Note the small poster in the alleyway behind the Turtles, announcing the grand opening of "Plastron Cafe." This was an in-house nod to the TMNT anthology book we published around that time.

Pages 22–25: I'm not sure why we thought two consecutive wordless two-page spreads showing almost exactly the same scene were a good idea, but I like them. The second one is odd, but I think I inked that whole thing… and I can't for the life of me remember why.

Page 28: I love the last panel, which foreshadows the chaotic melee that breaks out in the next issue as the Elite faction enters the fray.


$2.25 USA/$2.75 CANADA
ISSUE 53
NOVEMBER 1992
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
CITY AT WAR
MIRAGE PUBLISHING

#53

"TO TREAD THE PATH OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE, ONE MUST START WITHIN..."

1

"BEGIN WITH A STATE OF UNFOCUSED CONCENTRATION..."

"...LET THIS CLOUDY RIVER OF THOUGHT CARRY YOU FORWARD TO CLARITY..."

"AND THEN TO..."

"TO..."

DAMN...

C'MON, ROBYN-- OPEN THE DOOR! QUICK!

CLICK

APRIL, WHAT IS WITH YOU?

I FEEL RIDICULOUS...

YEAH... BUT YOU LOOK GREAT!

I DON'T KNOW, SIS ...THIS HAIR, THE CLOTHES...

... IT'S JUST NOT ME.

MMM... I THINK IT'S MORE YOU THAN YOU WANT TO ADMIT.

ALL THOSE YEARS BACK EAST BEING THE GOOD, RESPONSIBLE SENSIBLE GIRL...

YOU'VE BEEN SUPPRESSING YOUR WILD SIDE.

HI, COOLBEAN...

I DON'T KNOW... SOME OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN PRETTY ...WILD.

YEAH, RIGHT...

ANYWAY, YOU WERE GETTING A LOT OF LOOKS ON THE WAY HOME TONIGHT YA GOTTA ADMIT.

3

WELL, NO WONDER...
...I'M PRACTICALLY NAKED!

OH, APRIL, COME ON... YOU LOOK BITCHIN'!

"BITCHIN' "?

IF YOU SAY SO, ROB...

THE CLOTHES ARE... INTERESTING. I JUST WONDER IF OUR TIME WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER SPENT...

OH, LIKE SAY...

...CLEANING UP THIS PLACE?

OH, NOT THIS AGAIN...!

YOU'RE NOT MOM, APRIL...

...STOP BUGGING ME ABOUT THE WAY MY HOUSE LOOKS!

JEEZ... NEXT THING I KNOW, YOU'LL HAVE THE DUST BUNNY POLICE IN HERE!

COME ON, ROBYN, ADMIT IT--THIS PLACE IS A MESS!

YEAH, I ADMIT IT...

...BUT IT'S MY PLACE... AND MY MESS.

COMPRENDO, LITTLE SISTER?

GOT IT...

GHH--! UNH... APRIL...?

OH, MAN... WHAT TIME IZZIT? AND WHERE'S...

GABE?

FLUSH

HEY, GABE... YOU OKAY?

TAP TAP

CASEY... DON'T COME IN.

ARE YOU FEELIN' SICK?

UHRMM...

6

CASEY... I--

SIT DOWN... I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

GABE... YOU'VE BEEN CRYING-- WHAT'S WRONG?

CASEY... I--I...

...I'M PREGNANT.

WHA--HUH-- BUT--

I THOUGHT... YOU SAID... YOU WERE USING... YOU WERE PROTECTED...!

PREGNANCY IS GREAT PROTECTION, CASEY!

IT'S NOT YOURS... I'M ALMOST FOUR MONTHS ALONG.

OH...

I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU... I-I WAS AFRAID YOU'D LEAVE...

SO...NOW YOU KNOW, CASEY.

CASEY...?

DON'T JUST STAND THERE...

...SAY SOMETHING!

I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

OH, CASEY...

GABE, DON'T CRY... I'M NOT GONNA LEAVE YOU.

-: SNIFF :- DON'T STAY JUST BECAUSE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR ME...

IF I STAY... IT'S BECAUSE I WANT TO.

8

"MEDITATION..."

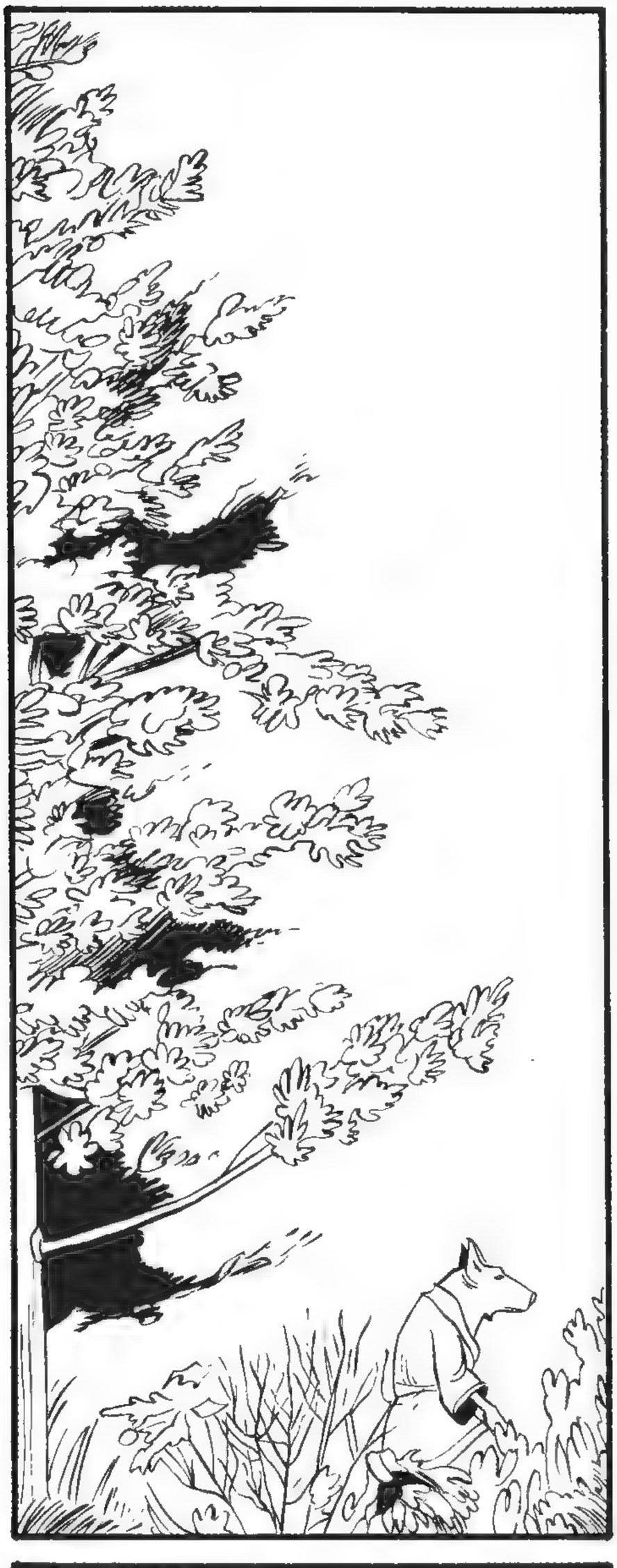
"ONCE... THE CLEAR MIRROR OF THE SOUL...

"ONCE... THE LIGHT SHINING ON THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT."

"NOW... THE WAY IS OBSCURE. I MEDITATE, BUT IT BRINGS NO CLARITY."

"NOW, THE PATH IS CHAOTIC..."

"AND I WALK IN DARKNESS."



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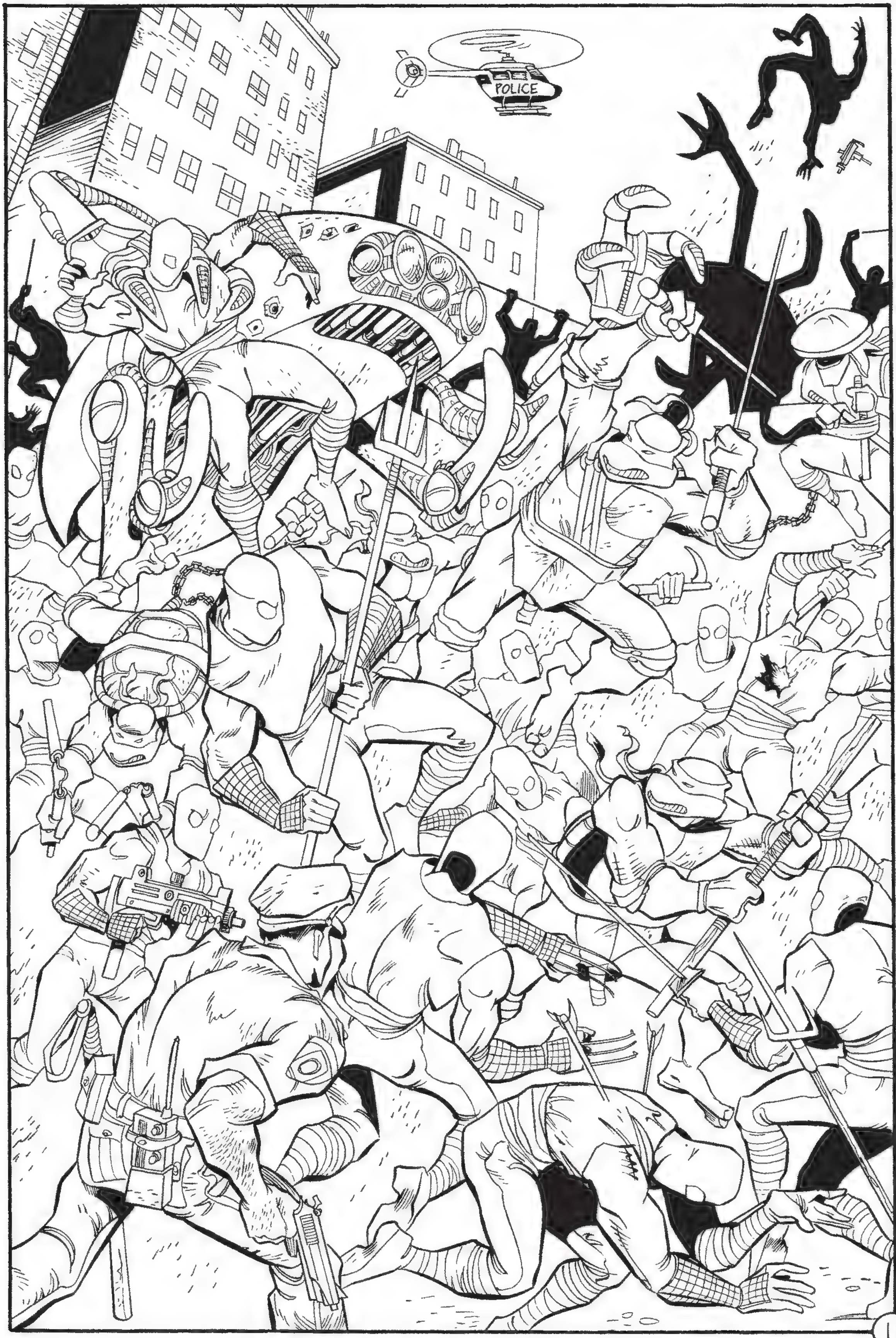


11

GRG

DRK

SHRK

12

POLICE

613

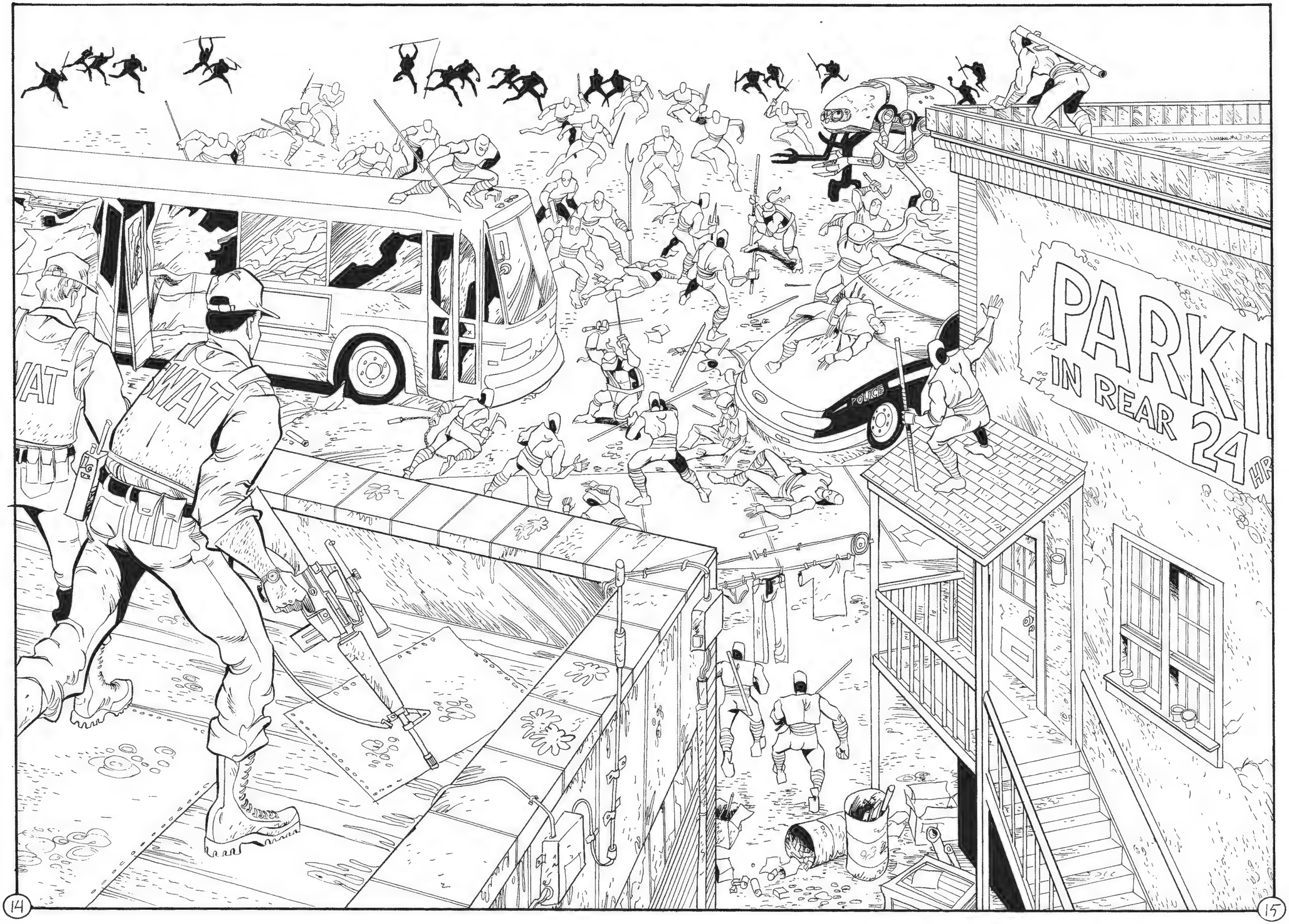
KIK

KERK

TOK

SERK

13



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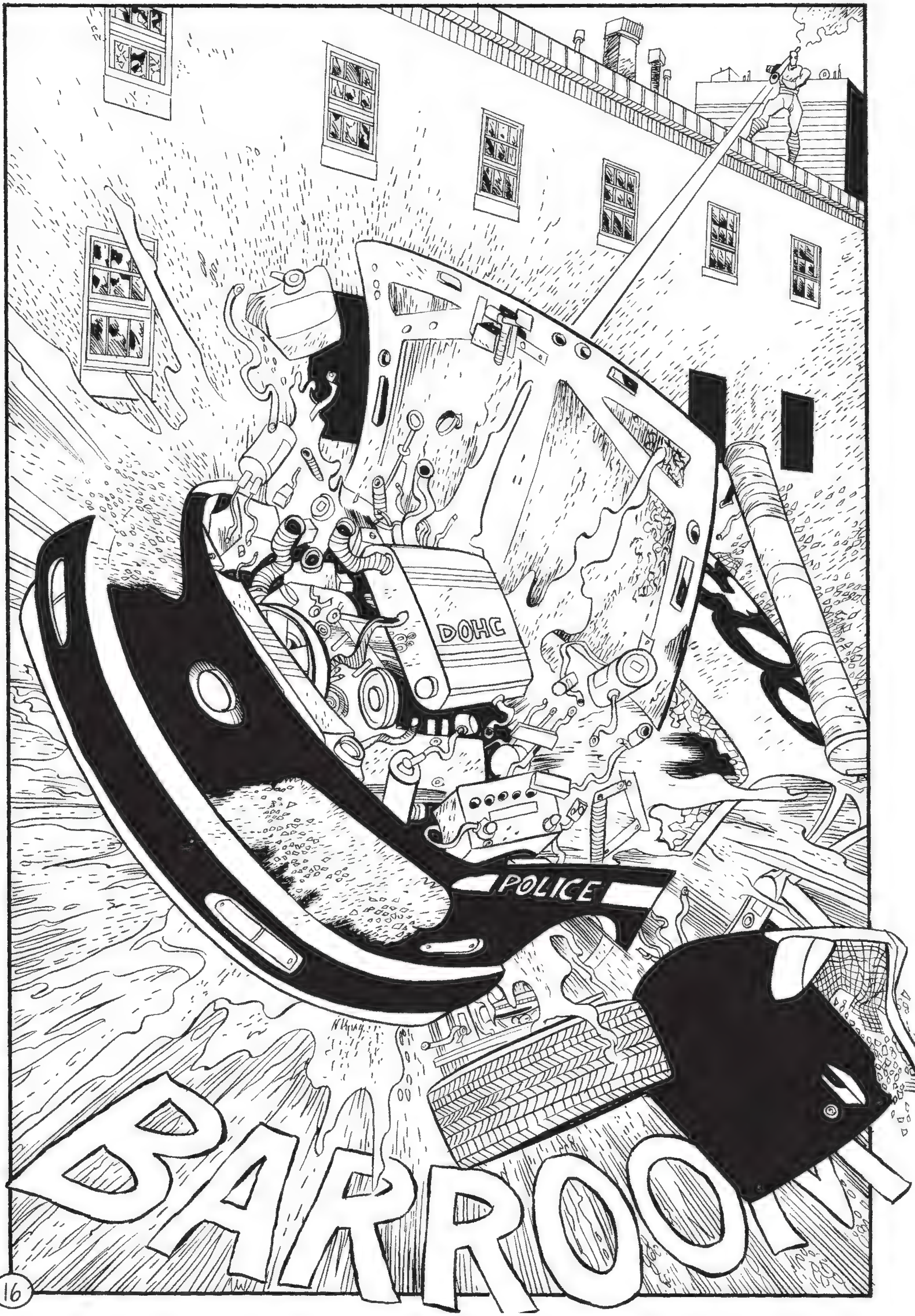


16

POLICE

SPAK

SPAK

SPAK

KERG

SHUK

NGG

LEO--?

MIKE--TRY TO TO GATHER THE OTHERS... MEET BACK IN THE ALLEY!

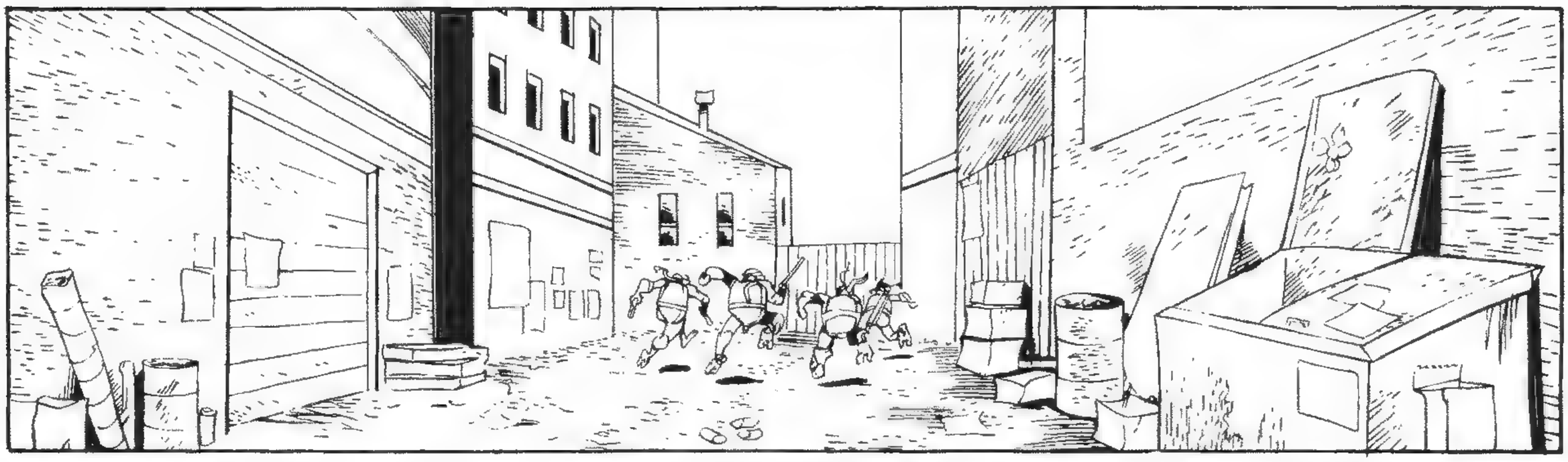
SPAF

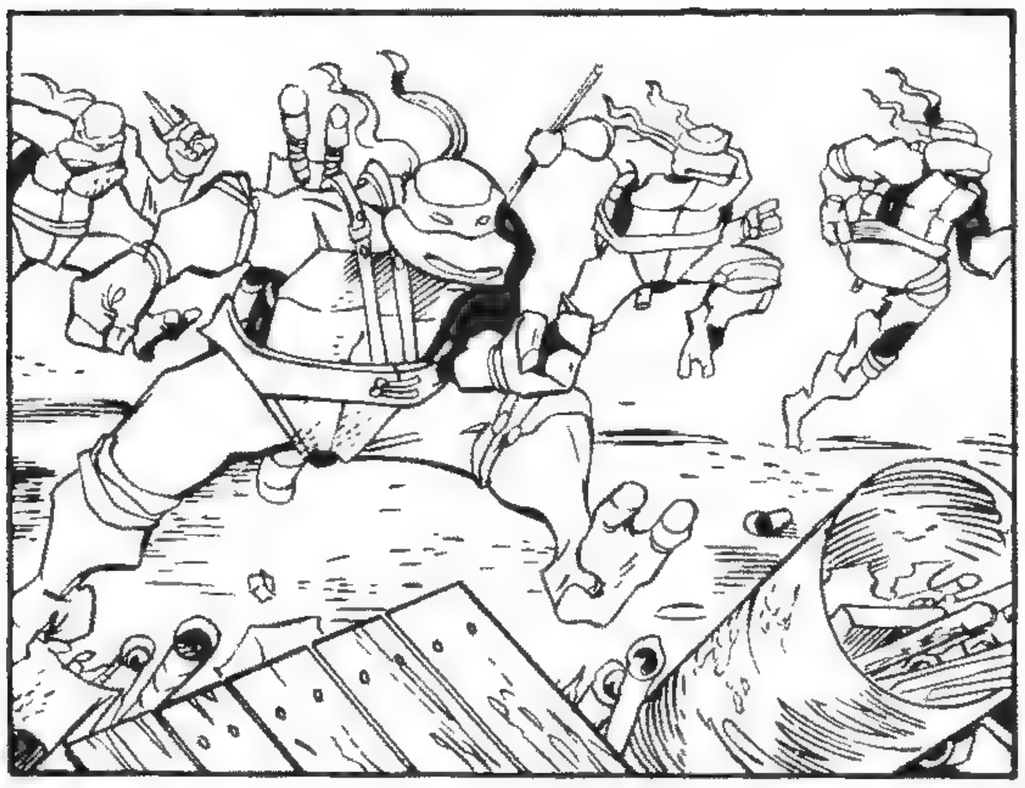
POLICE

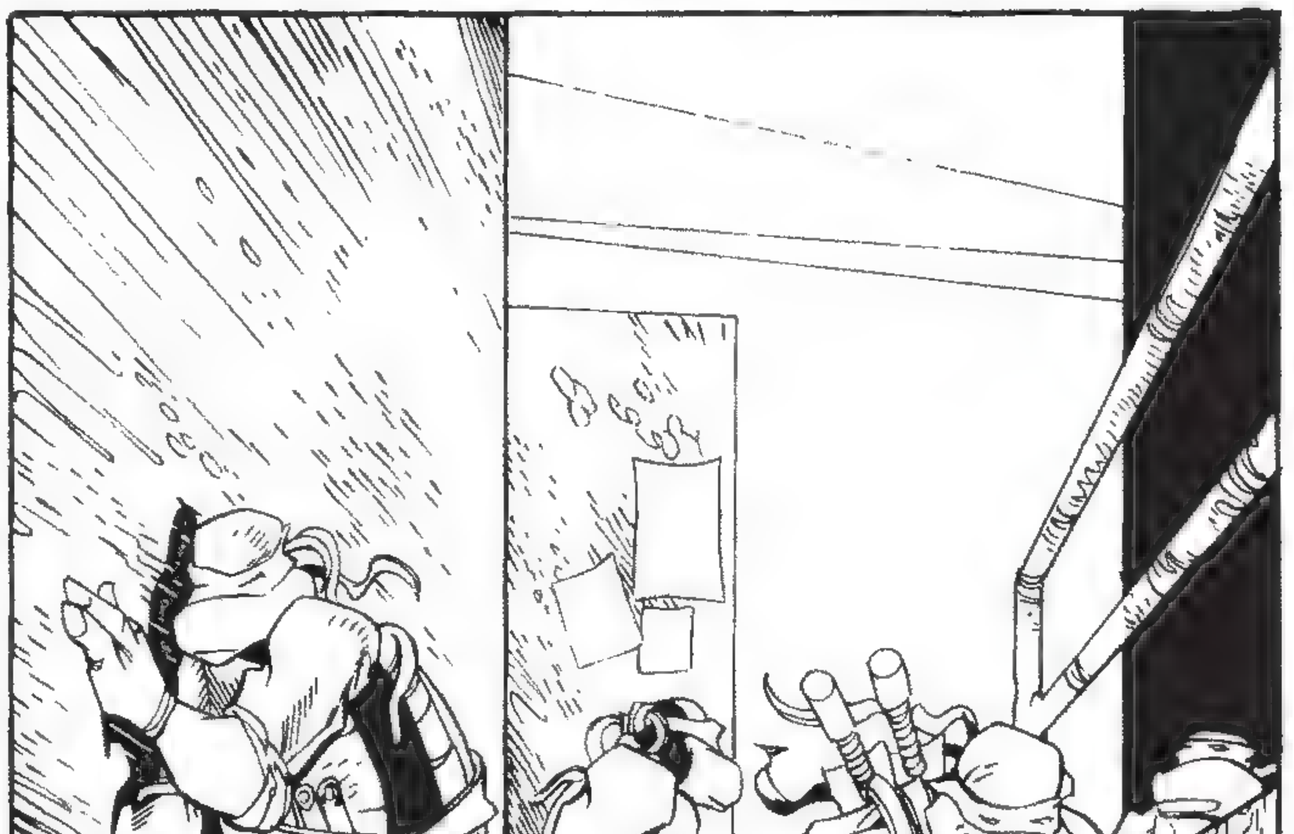
CARPE DIEM

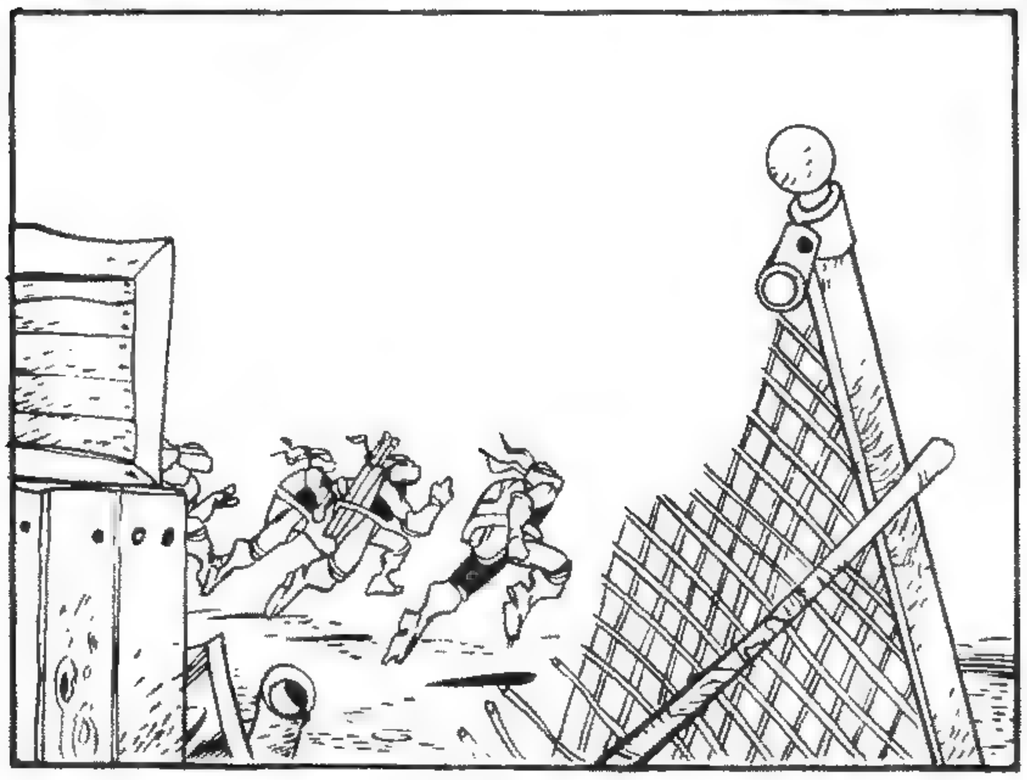
POLICE

21









IT... IT WAS... LIKE A... A...

YEAH...

MAELSTROM OF VIOLENCE?

WHY DID WE... WE SHOULDN'T EVEN HAVE BEEN THERE...

WHAT...? LEO...WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

WE WERE JUST... FUEL FOR THE FIRE...

WE JUST HELPED TO ESCALATE THE CONFLICT...

TO GET PEOPLE KILLED.

LEO...YOU CAN'T KNOW THAT...

DON... II ...SHUT UP.

I KNOW WHAT I SAW...

AND LET ME TELL YOU, BROTHERS... WHATEVER'S GOING ON...

WE ARE IN... WAY OVER OUR HEADS.

23

TOKYO, JAPAN

CNN

NEW YORK LIVE

"HAVE YOU SEEN ENOUGH?"

CNN

NEW YORK LIVE

"YES. TURN IT OFF."

THE SITUATION IS AT CRISIS LEVEL. WE SHOULD ACT... IMMEDIATELY.

I AGREE. ACTIVATE ALL UNITS...

CLICK

...IT IS TIME.

THE END

ANNOTATIONS

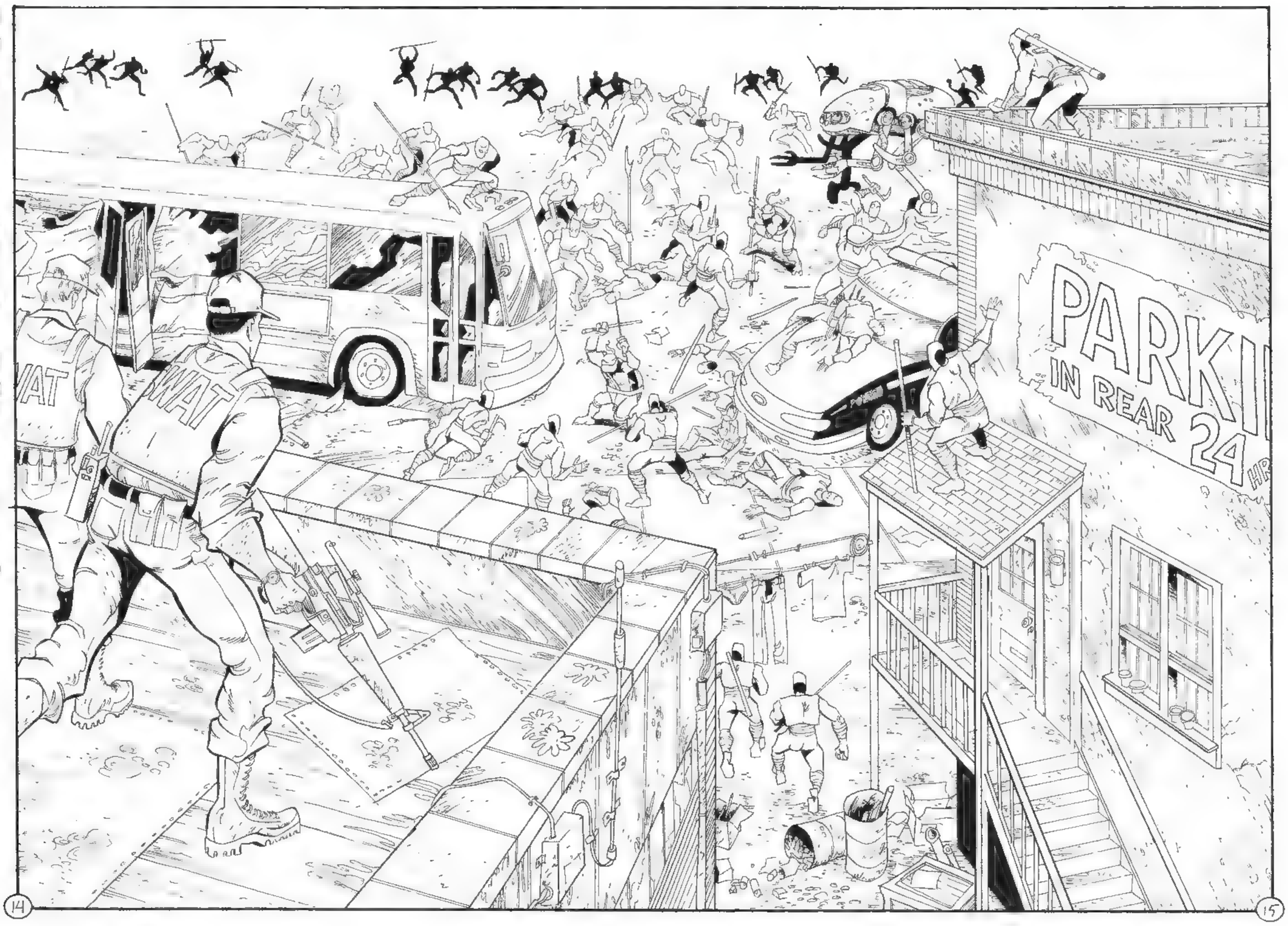
KEVIN EASTMAN

Well, I'm going to sound a lot like a broken record here when it comes to the A.C. Farley covers on this series—but the striking blood red rendering of his Shredder Elite warrior for the front of issue #53 really is quite breathtaking and powerful.

Funny thing I saw when I was looking through old notes and files for this issue/series, seems I've forgotten that we were originally going to call April's sister "June" instead of "Robyn"—and for the life of me can't recall why we switched it. Either name is fine, for sure, but calling her "June" would have been a funnier statement about their parents.

Page 1: Jim's layout for the opening splash here simply kicks butt! Splinter's personal struggle that he tries to control through his meditation, to me, is at least as powerful as the Turtles fighting the Foot soldiers and robots. He's the ever-solid father figure, teacher, and spiritual leader—to see him falter and struggle with his own demons is pretty powerful stuff.

KEVIN EASTMAN



14 15

Pages 6–7: As well as clearly showing—I'm pretty sure for the first time ever in our series—Casey having "adult relations" with a female character, he then finds out she is actually four months pregnant with someone else's child! That is and was the coolest part of exploring all the possible paths for each of the main characters to travel down here. The possibilities were endless, but they had to be carefully selected, and managed as to where they would end up.

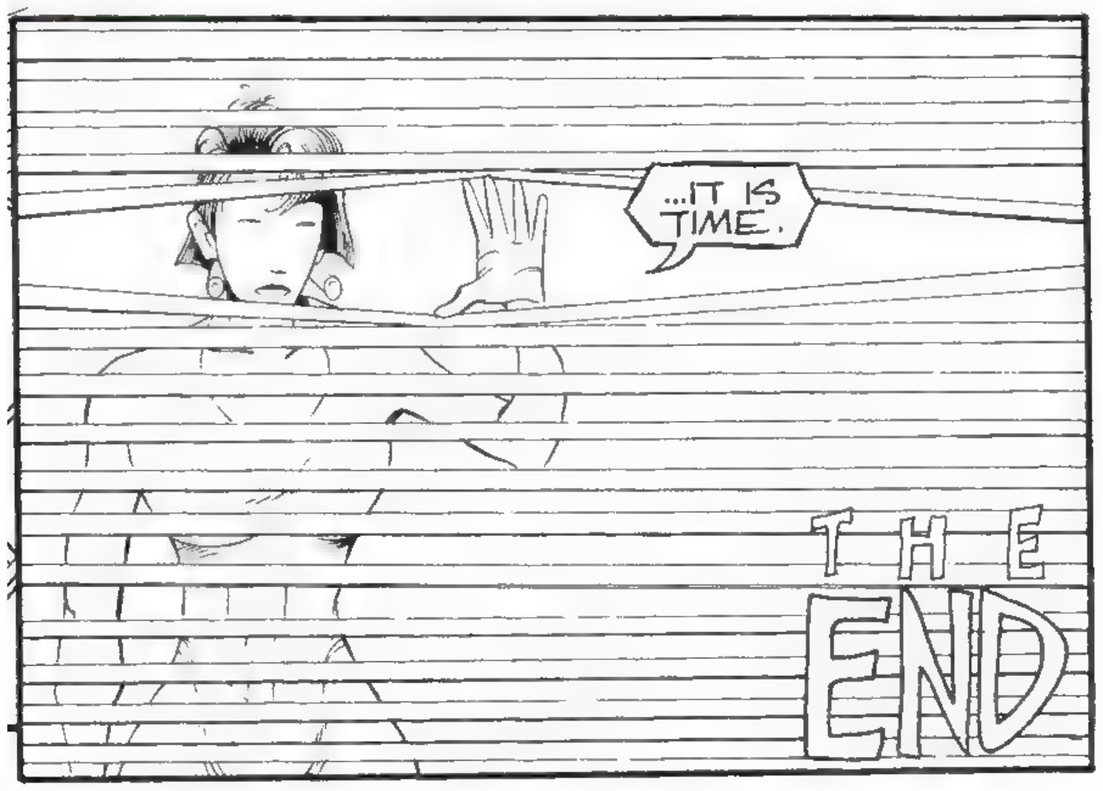
Many good and strong choices were made for all of them throughout the run, except maybe April's new hairdo and clothes, but that was also the point. I think what she's wearing was actually pretty popular at that time—the skintight workout gear look—though it's funny to look back at now, like those high-waisted "mom jeans" that went around back then. Funny.

Page 22: For me, the true power in this issue was the aftermath of the street fight, when the Turtles retreated to a back-alley/loading dock area to try and figure out what really just happened. Because it got out of control really quickly, and the collateral damage mounted just as fast—something they'd never really dealt with before.

This was an open street fight, pretty much in broad daylight, where Foot Robots were attacking Foot Accountants that were fighting Foot Grunt Soldiers… all while the Foot Elite were attacking and killing ANYTHING Foot related—with Turtles, cops and S.W.A.T. teams thrown in for good measure. The guys called it pretty clearly, and were surprised to realize that they were in way over their heads here.

Page 23: "Maelstrom of violence?" is an awesome line from page 23 that has a little bit of funny history. Back when Peter and I were working on *TMNT* issue #10, there was a line right after Leo was thrown through the window where Master Splinter says, "I sense a maelstrom of violence about to strike!" It took away a bit of the surprise of all the Foot Ninjas jumping through the windows of April's apartment over the next few pages, so after some discussion and a few chuckles, we took the line out. But we kept using it here and there in story jam sessions, like, after someone pitched an idea the other guy says, "Yeah, and then Splinter says, 'I sense a maelstrom of violence about to strike!'" And we all laugh.

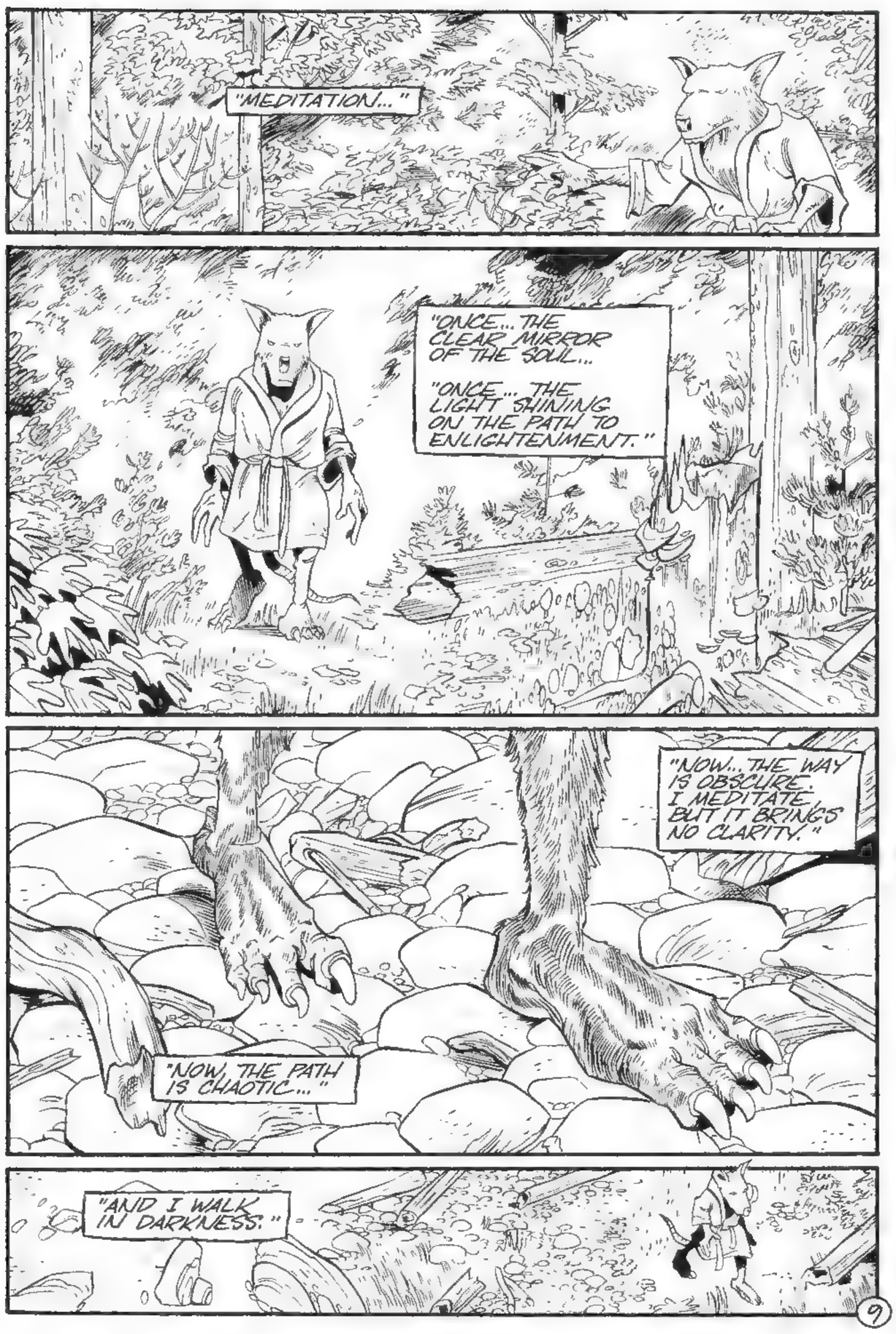
Page 24: Great way to end the issue here, "…it is time."



ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

Page 1: I love the abstract branch construction that Jim drew in the background of this splash page where Splinter is meditating… and it's never seen again. Actually, when I look at the following page and see the progression of the backgrounds as Splinter fails to reach the desired stage of his meditation, I wonder if that background on the first page is actually a construct of Splinter's disordered mind.


"MEDITATION..."
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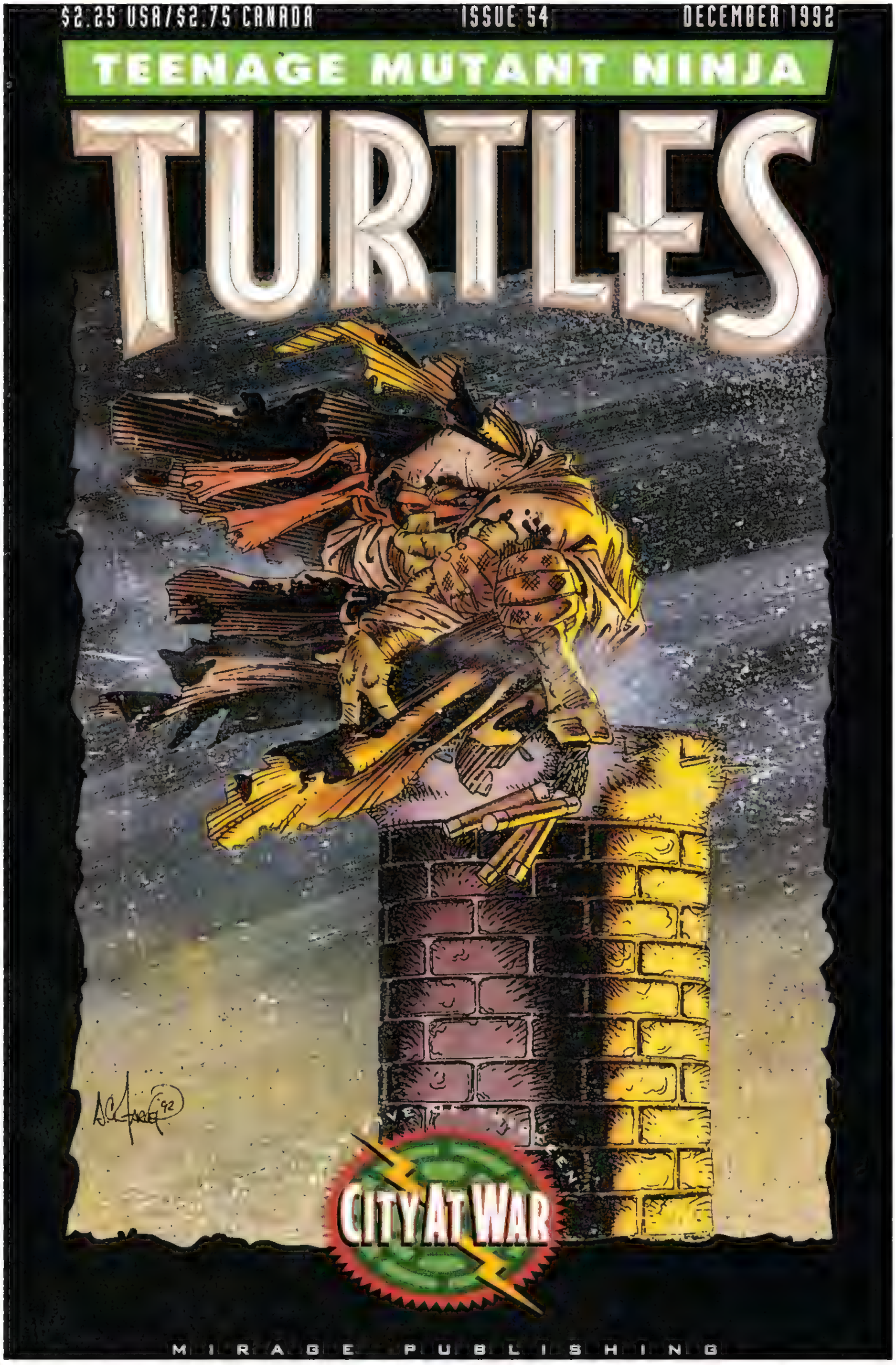
"NOW... THE WAY IS OBSCURE. I MEDITATE. BUT IT BRINGS NO CLARITY."
"NOW, THE PATH IS CHAOTIC..."
"AND I WALK IN DARKNESS."
9

Pages 9–10: More beautiful "Splinter in nature" stuff from Jim… and I should mention the inker of this issue, Matt Banning, did a really nice job inking Jim's pencils. The last panel here shows Splinter happening upon an old, abandoned factory building out in the woods with nary a hint of the dramatic events that will there befall the Turtles' sensei in coming issues.

Pages 17 and 19: These two pages have great examples of how good Jim's compositions within panels can be. On page 17, the right hand side of the page is one large vertical panel split up into three areas that show a Foot ninja taking aim at a police helicopter. In the first area, we see the Foot ninja taking aim with some kind of bazooka or RPG. Then the next area shows him reacting to the bullet hits being "walked" along the edge of the building he's standing on (SPAK! SPAK! SPAK!)—you can almost imagine him saying to himself "Oh, sh--!" And then the third area becomes a stark silhouette as the ninja is nailed by the police marksman.

And then on page 19, in an upside-down "L"-shaped panel, Jim shows the amazing agility and killing skills of the Elite ninja as he side-flips into a position to take out two Foot ninja… then disappears in a cloud of ninja smoke, leaving Leonardo not a little impressed.

I should also point out that Jim did a fantastic job portraying the escalating levels of violence as the battle draws in multiple factions of the Foot, the NYC police department, and the Turtles as well.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ISSUE 54
DECEMBER 1992
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
CITY AT WAR
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#54

EQUINE TREAT!
TENDERNIB
DOG
EW
MEAT FLAVORE

1

HERE YA GO, MA'AM...

THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN.

JONES!

HUH?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

I TOLD YOU, BOY, WE GOT RULES HERE ...PROCEDURES! BUT YOU PUT THE BREAD ON THE BOTTOM AGAIN...

...AND NO PLASTIC BAG AROUND THE ICE CREAM! CAN'T YOU RETAIN ANYTHING IN THAT PEABRAIN OF YOURS?!

BURGER BISCUITS SELF-IGNITING

LOUISE

NEW $1.29 CIG-STIX CIGARETTE-FLAVORED ORAL GRATIFICATION UNITS

C'MON, MR. TALBOTT-- I'M STILL GETTIN' THE HANG OF THIS. I'LL GET IT RIGHT NEXT TIME.

NO, I DON'T THINK SO... YOU'RE A CLASSIC SCREW-UP, JONES. YOU'LL NEVER "GET IT." I'VE SEEN YOUR TYPE BEFORE...

2

...AND I'M GOING TO BE WATCHING YOU REAL CLOSE...

...IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE THIS JOB, I'VE GOT TOILETS OUT BACK THAT NEED SCRUBBIN'!

I TELL YOU, LOUISE... WE'VE GOT THE KING OF THE PEABRAINS FOR A BAGBOY HERE...!

HERE...

...BAG THIS!

BAF

CLEAN UP, AISLE FOUR!

EXIT

OH, MAN...

PULL

EXIT

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS...

E 1

UM... LOOK, I'M SORRY, MR. TALBOTT. I LOST MY TEMPER --IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN...

...I REALLY NEED THIS JOB.

WHAT...?

ARE YOU NUTS?!

AFTER WHAT YOU JUST DID?!

YOU WANT THIS JOB? GET ON YOUR KNEES AND BEG ME FOR IT!

UH... PLEASE GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE, MR. TALBOTT ...SIR...?

NO!

WUNT

LOOKS GOOD ON YA, TALBUTTHEAD!

4

OLD SMELLS... FADING ECHOES OF TOIL AND PAIN...

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? STRANGE...BUT SOMEHOW...

FAMILIAR.

ABANDONED BY MAN...RULED NOW BY YOU, MY LITTLE BROTHERS.

SOMETHING UNUSUAL HERE...

SOME BARELY GLIMPSED MEMORY... A HINT OF... OF...

...LONELINESS?

HMM...

WH--?!
AAAAAAAAAIEEEEE
6

"DAMN! LOST IT AGAIN!"

DON'T SWEAT IT, APRIL... JUST BOOT UP AGAIN.

THIS SYSTEM HAS SOME QUIRKS... YOU'LL GET THE HANG OF IT.

CALL RON

RULES

CALL BILL NOW!

I GUESS I'M A LITTLE RUSTY... THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP, COLIN.

HEY, MY PLEASURE!

I MAKE A POINT OF WELCOMING ALL THE NEW EMPLOYEES... ESPECIALLY THE REALLY CUTE ONES!

SAY... DOING ANYTHING FOR DINNER TONIGHT?

UHH... I'VE..GOT PLANS... SORRY...

NO PROB! I'LL TAKE A RAINCHECK! SEE YA LATER!

OKAY... 'BYE.

JEEZ...

UNH... LEG FEELS... NOT RIGHT...

TRY... MOVING IT...

AAARRGH!

UNH...

SHOCK... LOSS OF BLOOD...

MUST NOT... PASS OUT...

PAIN... IS A... MIND BEAST...

BROKEN... IN TWO PLACES...

AHH... HURTS...

...DEADLY... BUT... TAMEABLE...

CONCENTRATE... ON THE TASK... AT HAND... LET THE PAIN FLOW BY...

DO WHAT... IS NEEDED...

AND... DO IT... QUICKLY...

NOW...

MUST PULL... TIGHTLY...

READY...

AAHHRR!!!

SO...HOW'D THE FIRST DAY GO?

PRETTY GOOD...I THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE IT.

NEED SOME KIND OF REFRESHER COURSE IN PROGRAMMING, THOUGH... I'VE GOTTEN PRETTY RUSTY.

HI, AP'L...

OH, HI, TREVOR!

SAY, ROBYN--HOW'S COLIN?

AS MUCH OF A JERK NOW AS WHEN WE WERE MARRIED. OOPS...SHOULDN'T RAG ON HIS DADDY IN FRONT OF TREV... IT'S JUST THAT COLIN IS SO... SO...

10

...SO "COLIN"?

TREE!

EGG-ZACTLY! PATRONIZING WITH A CAPITAL "P"! BUT ENOUGH OF MY EX...

...MIND CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS A FEW DAYS EARLY?

TREE!

NO... I DON'T MIND. IT'S JUST THAT IT DOESN'T SEEM MUCH LIKE CHRISTMAS WHEN IT'S NINETY DEGREES OUTSIDE!

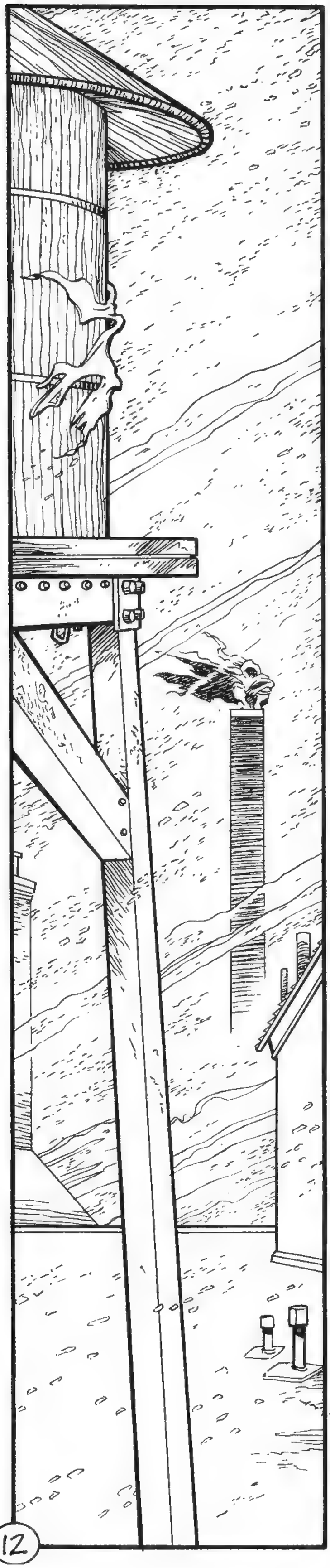
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

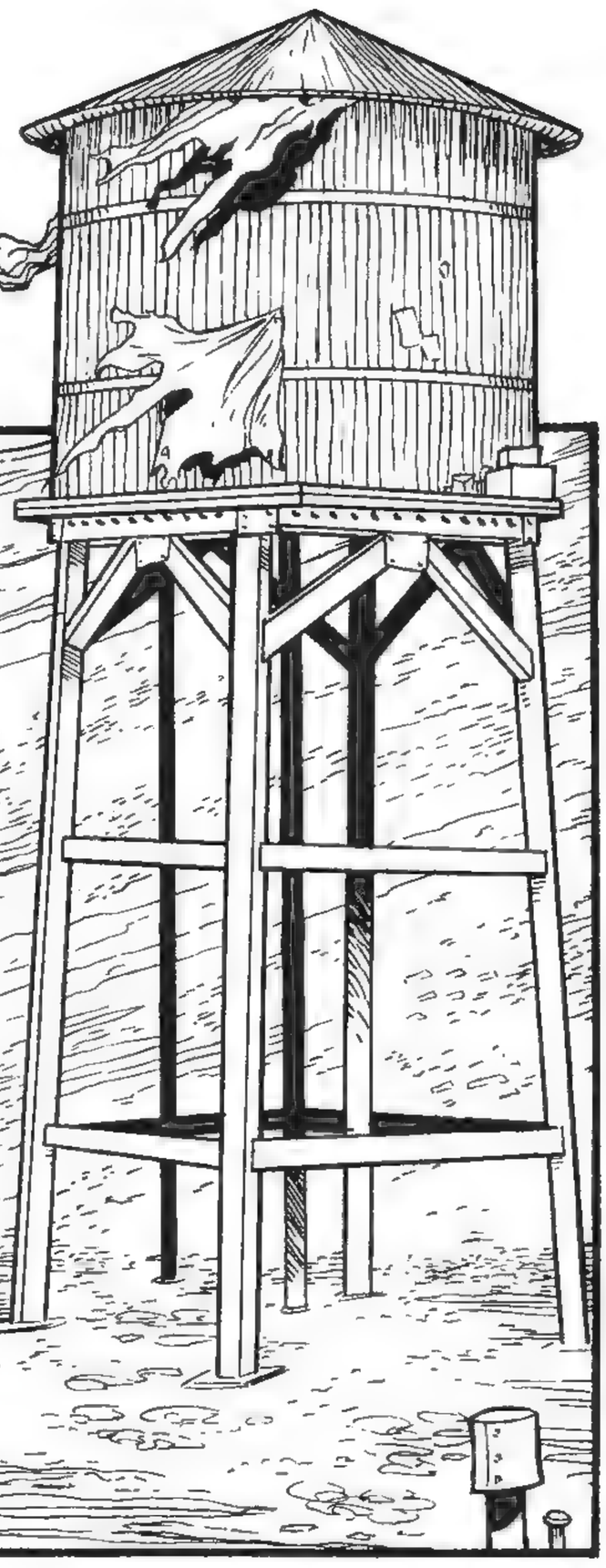
I MISS THOSE SNOWY CONNECTICUT CHRISTMASES ...WONDER WHERE WE CAN GET A TREE?

BIG TREE!

I DON'T KNOW... DO THEY SELL REAL CHRISTMAS TREES OUT HERE?

YOU BET! OH, THIS IS GONNA BE GREAT... JUST LIKE A REAL LITTLE FAMILY!





--EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE RECENT INCREASE IN WHAT ARE BEING TERMED "RETALIATORY ACTS" STEMMING FROM THE STREET MASSACRE OF LAST MONTH.

IN OTHER NEWS: A WIDE-SPREAD PANIC ERUPTED AT THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE WHEN A COMPUTER VIRUS ENCRYPTED OR DESTROYED THOUSANDS OF FILES BEFORE IT WAS CONTAINED.

IT MAY BE SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE FULL EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE CAN BE ASSESSED. SHOCKWAVES IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRADING MARKETS--

TURN IT OFF, RAPH.

ALL QUIET OUT THERE, MIKE?

YUP...

WANT ME TO TAKE NEXT WATCH, LEO?

...COLD AN' WET AS HECK, TOO.

HMM...? YES... I SUPPOSE YOU SHOULD.

HUH?

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, LEO?

BRRR...

13

THIS CONFUSION...THIS LACK OF CLEAR PURPOSE...IT WEIGHS ON ME... LIKE THE COLD OF THE APPROACHING WINTER, IT SEEKS TO PARALYZE ME... AND I CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE IT--

HEY, LOOSEN UP, LEO...WE CAN'T HAVE YOU QUITTING ON US--!

NOT QUITTING, DON... ACCEPTING REALITY.

TRYING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE TWO FACTS:

WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ...

...AND WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL WE'RE DOING!

MAYBE... MAYBE IF SPLINTER WAS HERE... HE'D KNOW...

...TIME TO ACCEPT OUR LIMITATIONS. AND TIME TO SEE THE WORLD FOR WHAT IT IS...

MAYBE... AND MAYBE NOT. IT'S TIME FOR US TO GROW UP, RAPH...

...TIME TO ACCEPT OUR TRUE PLACE IN IT. MAYBE...TIME TO TURN AWAY FROM ALL THIS.

LEAVE? BUT... BUT...WHAT ABOUT OUR DUTY? WHAT ABOUT ...HONOR?

HONOR? HEH...

...I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THERE'S NO PLACE FOR HONOR IN THIS WORLD.

GREED... HATRED... VIOLENCE... THE LUST FOR VENGEANCE...

THESE ARE THE PRIMARY MOTIVATORS.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU, LEO?

LATELY...

... I DON'T HAVE A CLUE.

"KARAI?"

WHAT IS IT, YANURA?

WE'VE FINISHED DE-CRYPTING THE SATELLITE VIDEO FEED FROM OUR NEW YORK SOURCE. IT IS--

DID YOU TAPE THE RESULT?

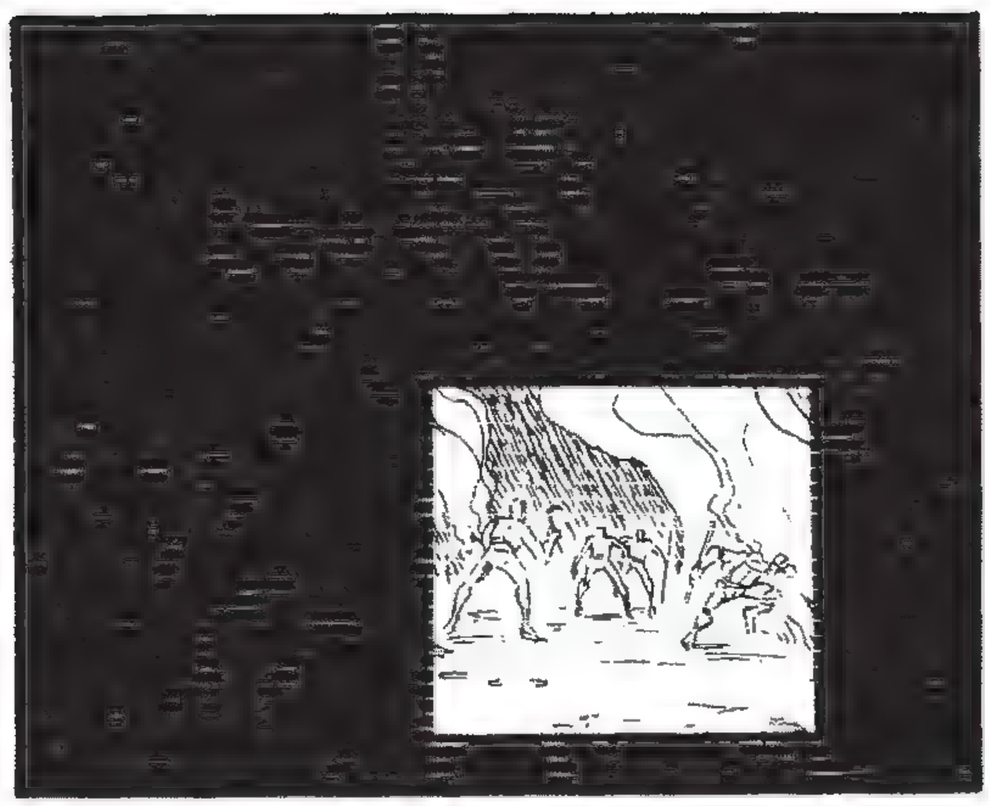
OF COURSE!

LEAVE IT HERE!

HMMM...

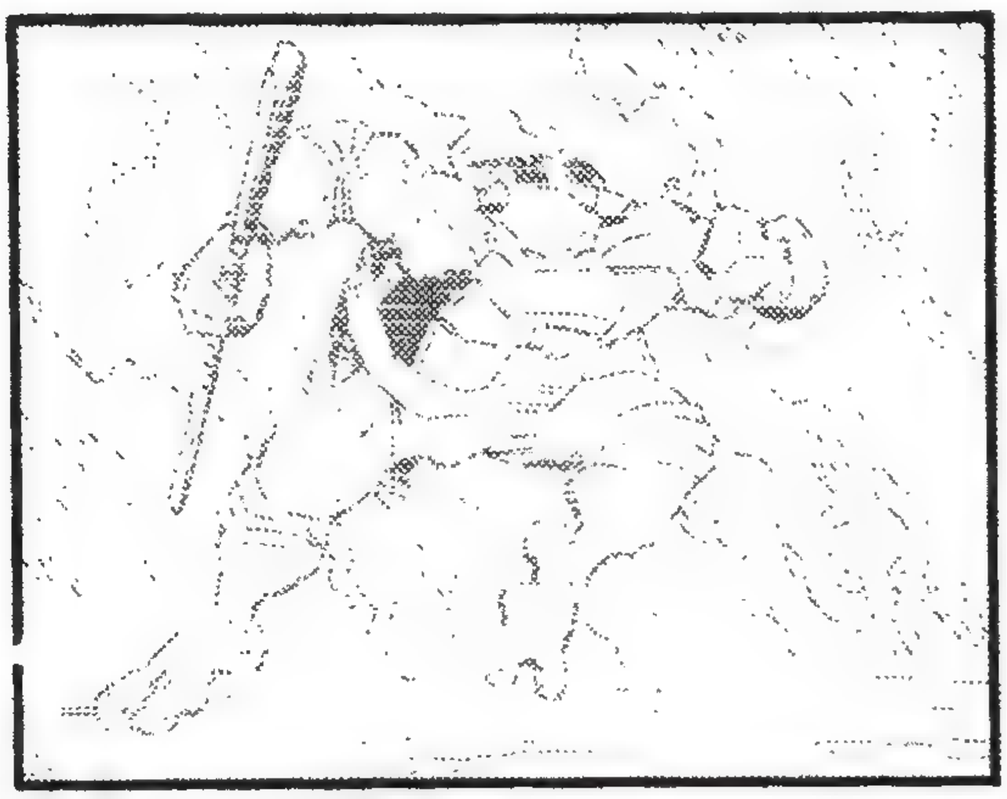
16

FREEZE

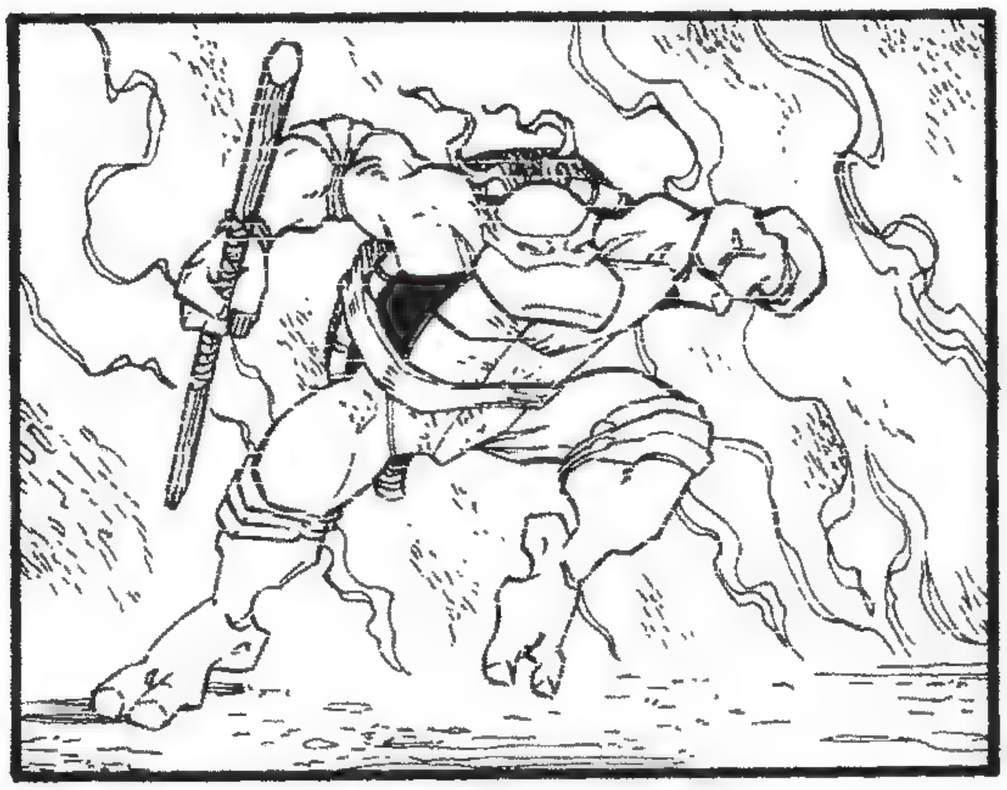


FRAME / CROP

ENLARGE FIGURE



ENHANCE



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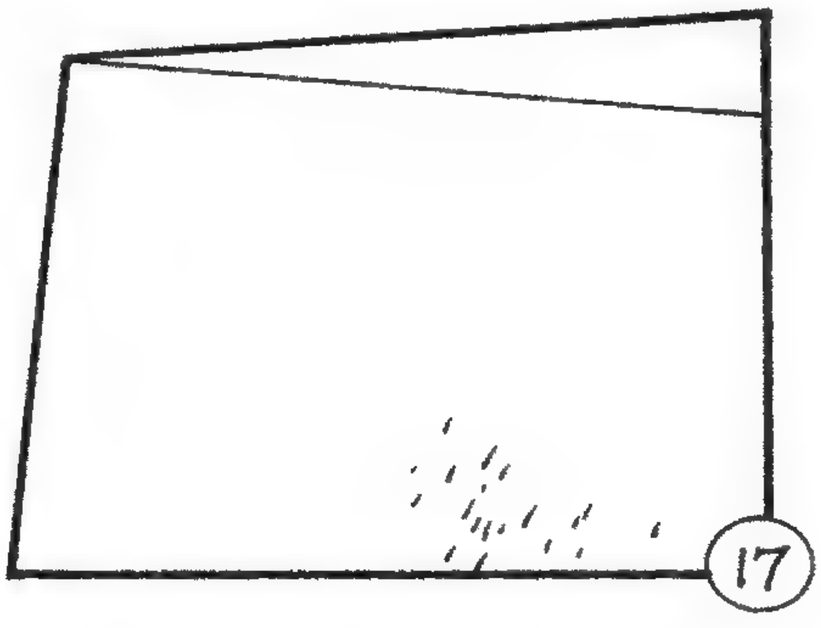


PAIN... OF SPLINTING MY LEG ...MADE ME BLACK OUT...

UNH...

MUST... TRY TO STAND...

AH...

AHNGH...

UHH...

TO SEE... IF I... CAN...

AAAARRGH!

UHNGH... TOO SOON...LEG... NEEDS TIME... TO HEAL...

BUT... WITH COLD WEATHER COMING... NO FOOD...LITTLE SHELTER...

"CAN I AFFORD ...THAT TIME...?"

OH, CASEY...

...IT LOOKS WONDERFUL!

YEAH? THANKS, GABE...

...SO DO YOU.

YOU THINK SO? EVEN WITH THESE JEANS LOOKING LIKE THEY'RE ABOUT TO SPLIT OPEN?

JUST ONE OF THOSE GREAT SIDE EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY I GUESS... BUMPVILLE, USA.

NO... IT LOOKS GOOD. CAN YOU FEEL IT... Y'KNOW... KICKING?

NAH... JUST LITTLE, LIKE FLUTTERS.

WOW

HEY!

BACK HOME, WE ALWAYS OPEN UP ONE CHRISTMAS PRESENT EARLY, HERE!

MERRY X-MAS

HEY, I KINDA LIKE THAT TRADITION!

HMM... DOESN'T RATTLE... NOT TOO HEAVY... LET'S SEE...!

RIP

OOOH...

OH, CASEY... TH-THANKS...

:SNIF:

HEY, GABE...

...DON'T WORRY ABOUT FITTIN' INTO IT NOW ...YOU CAN WEAR IT AFTER THE BABY COMES.

RADIOLOGY

21

WHAT THE HELL?

WEOO WEOO

KEK

UK!

YAAR!

SURK

KERSH

DURK

23

24

"--SERBIAN REBELS STEPPED UP THEIR BOMBARDMENT OF THE BOSNIAN CAPITOL TODAY, RESULTING IN TEMPORARY DELAYS OF FLIGHTS IN AND OUT OF SARAJEVO. UNITED NATIONS OFFICIALS HAVE PROPOSED A CEASE-FIRE ON CHRISTMAS DAY TO--"

CLICK

--FIRE CONSUMED MOST OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN UNLICENSED BIOENGINEERING LAB. FIRE OFFICIALS DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRE, THOUGH UNNAMED SOURCES IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT SUGGEST...

25

...THAT THIS BLAZE IS LINKED TO THE RECENT WAVE OF DESTRUCTIVE INCIDENTS PLAGUING THE CITY...

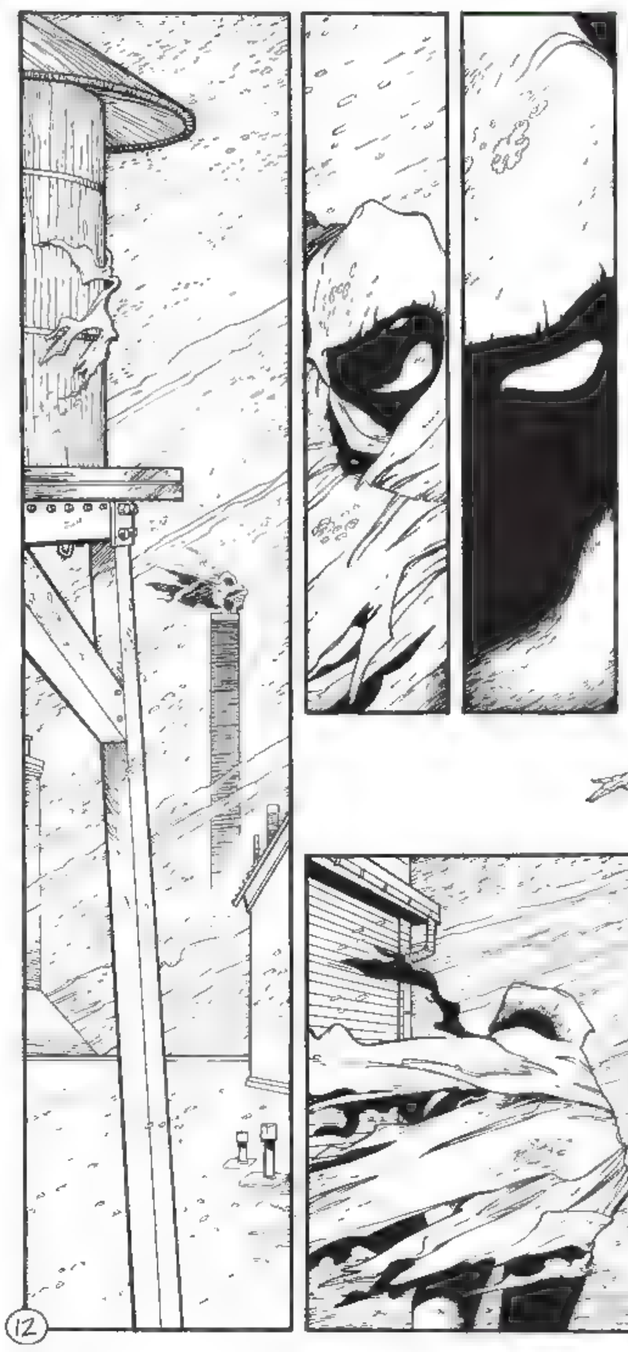
...LEADING THIS REPORTER TO WONDER: WHEN WILL THIS VIOLENCE STOP?

THIS END UP

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

Page 2: The opening scene here with Casey and Mr. Talbott at the grocery store is genius. Really awesome storytelling device, showing Casey IS trying hard to change—but at the end of the day, he's still Casey. Very well spun by Jim and Peter.



Page 8: Which then leads to one of my all-time favorite series of beats in the arc for Splinter. You might recognize his location from *Tales of the TMNT* #4… awesomeness coming.

Pages 12–15: I completely love the "Winter in the Water Tower" scene as it plays out here. Not only because of the visual aspect—the way it is laid out and spun—but the discussion is as real and as honest as any the TMNT have ever had. It really is a hard look at what their role in this game, this war, and this world is supposed to be. They have completely lost all focus and sense of purpose. Very strong stuff here.

Pages 17–21: The fun part about reaching this place in the series is that many of the original plot points spotted here and there over the last six issues are starting to fall nicely into place, and (hopefully) engaging the audience completely—as this is the mid-point where we unleash all the other clues that will propel everything forward during the next six. Karai spotting Donatello in the smoke screen of the big city street brawl, Splinter trapped and hopeless with a broken leg at the bottom of an abandoned factory tower, and Casey's gift to Gabe as he tries hard to fully step up to the "responsibility plate." It's beautiful stuff, and great foreshadowing that "The best is yet to come."

Page 21: I also love how we seeded the recovery of Nate in every issue. Nate, as you recall, was the poor old man that was caught in the explosion the Foot set off in the Adult Book Store back in issue #50. We agreed early on that one of the plot devices would be following Nate's recovery process. We never used any dialogue, the silent progression a sort of a barometer for everything else that is going on with the characters in the story. Nate also has a solid arc through the series—but no spoilers from me here, yet.

Page 26: The final shot here is just awesome. We're in the water tower with the TMNTs! Fun stuff!

PETER LAIRD

I don't have much to say about this issue. There's not a lot of action in it, but the whole story moves forward several paces. Probably the coolest page (literally?) is page 12, where we see Michelangelo standing watch while perched on a chimney overlooking the water tower the Turtles have taken over as their hideout. There appears to be a winter storm raging. (This page inspired the scene Craig Farley picked for his beautiful cover.)

I have to say I chuckled when I saw the interior of the water tower on the next page. Not only have the Turtles fitted it out with electric power, but they have a coffee maker, lamps, a TV, comfortable furniture, and an electric heater. Pretty good work!

Perhaps the most important thing that happens in this issue is Splinter falling into the huge chimney (or whatever it is) at the abandoned factory and breaking his leg… although as I read that (a scene set in Northampton, quite a few miles north of New York City), I started to wonder why it's snowing hard in NYC, but not at all where Splinter is. Oops.

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JANUARY 1993
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
CITY AT WAR
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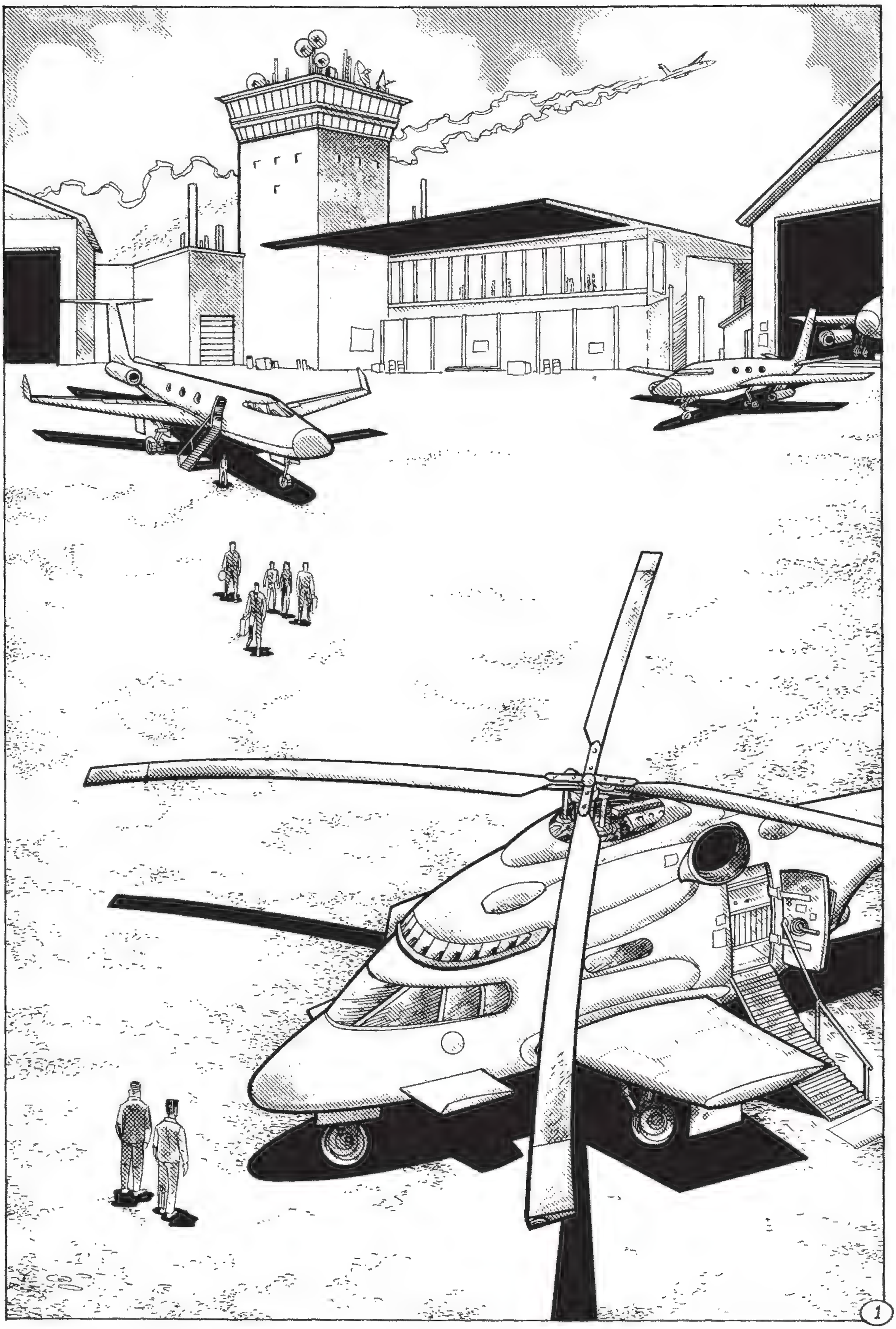
#55



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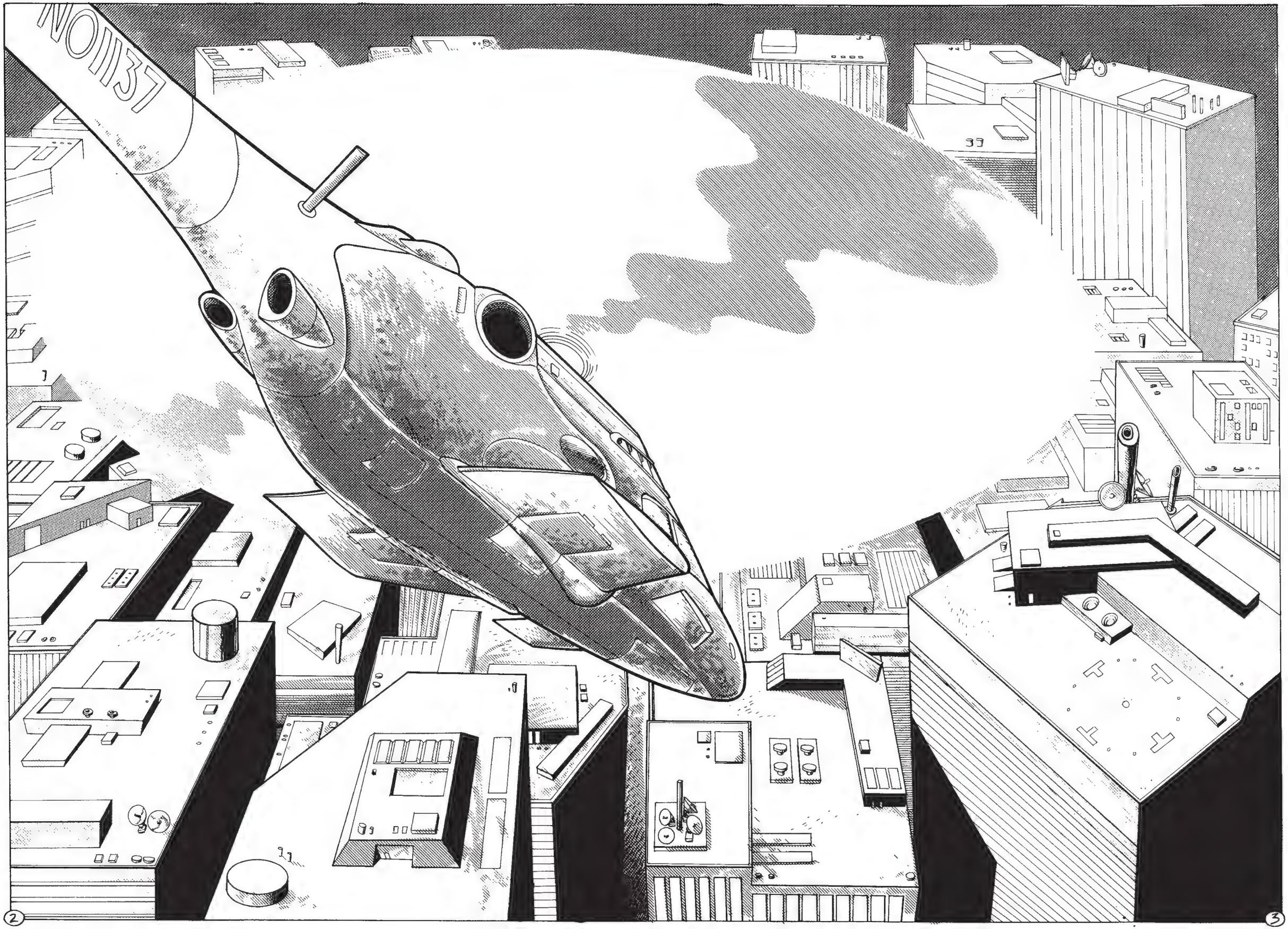
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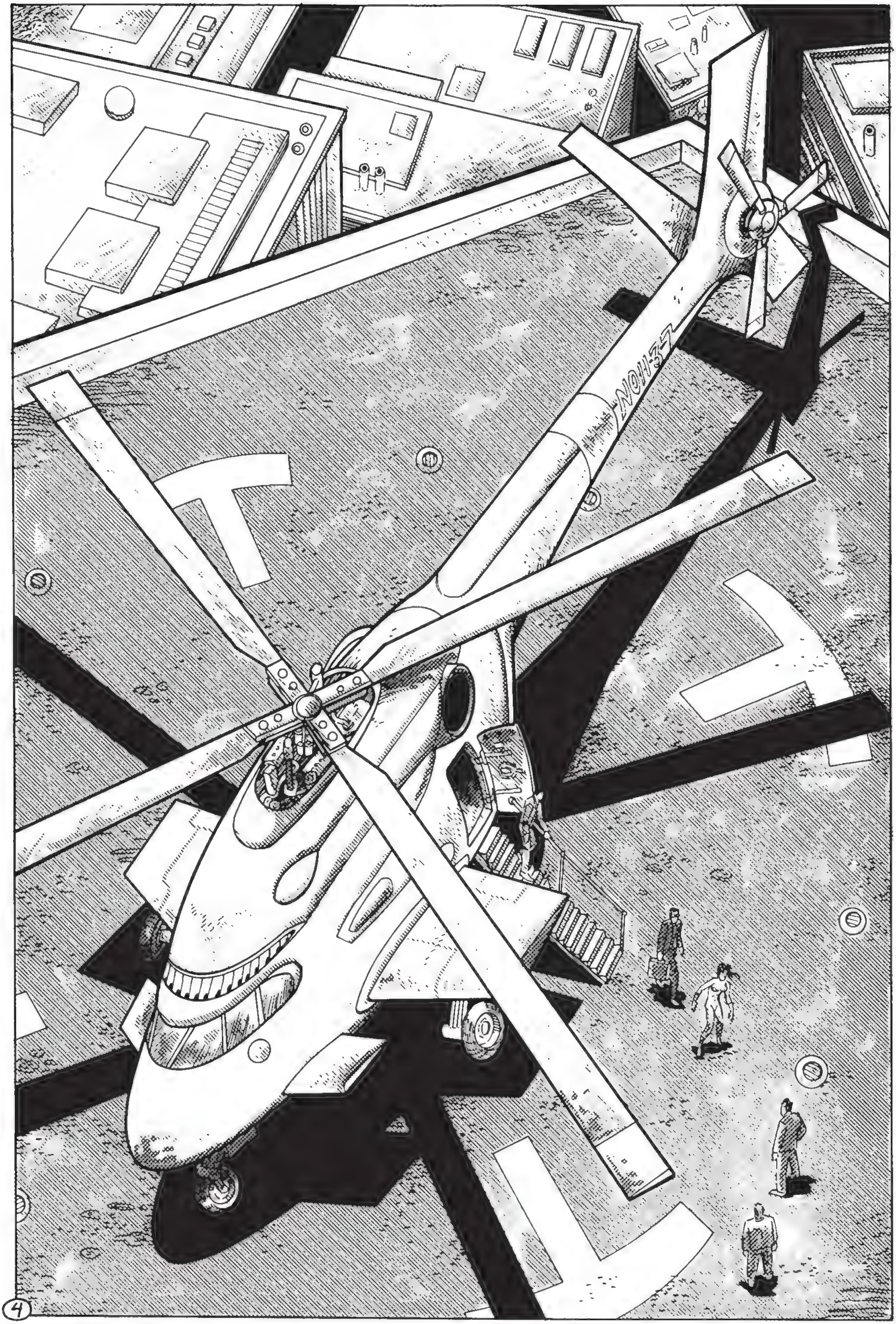
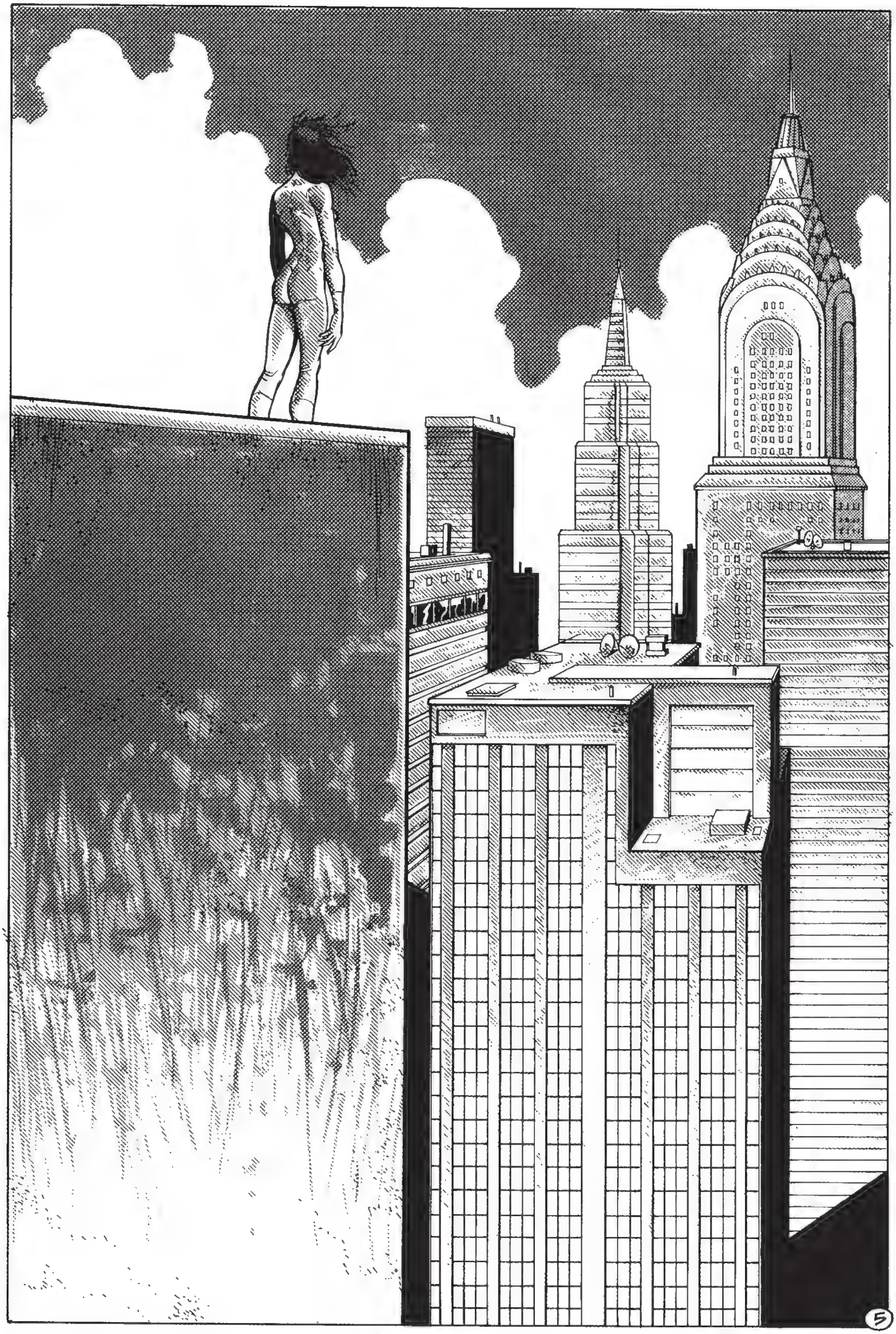

NOW!
4


5

THESE DESERT SUNSETS ARE BEAUTIFUL ...A LOT DIFFERENT FROM BACK IN MASSACHUSETTS...

HMM? YEAH...

Y'KNOW...WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I NEVER USED TO STOP AND DO STUFF LIKE THIS...

...GUESS WHEN YOU GET OLDER, YOU WANNA TAKE THE TIME... TO SEE WHAT'S AROUND YOU...

HUH?

MAYBE... IT'S THE BABY TOO.

YEAH... I'VE BEEN, UH, READING SOME OF THOSE BABY BOOKS YOU HAVE...

...AND THEY SAY BEIN' PREGNANT KIND OF DIRECTS YOUR THOUGHTS AND ENERGIES INWARD... MAKES YOU NATURALLY REFLECTIVE...

OH, REALLY...

MMM...

6

WELL... ALL THIS REFLECTIN' IS MAKING ME HUNGRY... GUESS WE SHOULD HEAD BACK...

GABE... UH... BEFORE WE DO... UM... THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO ASK YOU...

YEAH?

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT THIS A LOT... AND... WELL...

WOULD YOU MARRY ME, GABE?

WHA--?

CASEY, I--

OMIGOD...

YES.

...SO WHENEVER I WRITE A NEW PROGRAM, I LEAVE A "BACK DOOR" IN IT THAT I CAN OPEN WITH MY OWN PASSWORD...

I GET A KICK OUT OF IT... ACCESSING THE ACCOUNTS FILES-- Y'KNOW, SEE WHAT THEY'RE UP TO... IT'S A GAME TO ME.

I LIKE GAMES, APRIL...

YEEOW!!!

YUCK!

MY CLOTHES--! WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR--?!

YOU WANT TO PLAY GAMES, GO PLAY WITH YOURSELF!

WHAT A SLEAZE... YET ANOTHER NICE TAN WITH A JERK UNDERNEATH...

I'M REALLY BEGINNING TO HATE THIS TOWN ...I CAME TO L.A. TO GET AWAY FROM MY PROBLEMS... BUT I JUST TRADED THEM FOR NEW ONES.

HEH... JUST OCCURRED TO ME HOW TRENDY IT IS OUT HERE TO HAVE A CRAPPY LIFE...

...OR IS IT CRAPPY TO HAVE A TRENDY LIFE?

HELP

EARTHQUAKE COUNSELING

B.U.

QUIPM

HOUK'S PIZZA

WAKE UP.

UHHH...

YOU NEED FOOD...

EH...?

YOU MUST EAT...

Y-YES... BUT...

THERE... THERE IS NO FOOD...

THEN HOW DO THE RATS SURVIVE?

THE... RATS...?

10

THEY... THEY SCAVENGE...

YES... THEY DO WHAT IS NECESSARY... TO SUSTAIN LIFE.

WHO... ARE YOU? ARE YOU... DEATH?

NO.

SHOW YOURSELF...!

YOU WILL SEE ALL YOU NEED TO SEE.

HELP ME...

THE HELP YOU SEEK... IS YOUR OWN.

THERE IS LITTLE NOURISHMENT IN RIDDLES, SHADOW...

THE RIDDLE IS YOURS ...THAT WHICH CAN SUSTAIN YOU IS WITHIN YOUR REACH ...BUT NOT YET WITHIN YOUR GRASP.

I'M HUNGRY... COLD... IN PAIN... AND YET YOU TORMENT ME...

YOU ***ARE*** DEATH.

I AM NOT...

...BUT I KNOW DEATH.

BEAUTIFUL NIGHT...

MMMM...

FEEL UP TO A TRAINING RUN, MIKE?

URGH... NAH, NOT REALLY, LEO...

C'MON-- IT'LL WORK OUT THE COBWEBS.

I'LL GO GET THE OTHERS.

GREAT... I'M SURE THEY'LL BE JUST AS EXCITED.

12

GRAB YOUR STUFF, BROS-- WE'RE GOING ON A RUN!

JEEZ, LEO--NOT NOW!

#1 TOODFY MUNSTERS

FACE IT, RAPH --IT MAY NOT BE MUCH FUN, BUT AT LEAST IT BEATS SITTING HERE FREEZING...

WELL, MAYBE I'M GETTIN' SOS I KINDA LIKE BEIN' FROZEN!

IT COULD HAPPEN!

AH, HELL...

I HATE THIS.

SPLORT

HUH?

PHEW!

14

THAT TEARS IT...

HEY, YOU GUYS-- WAIT UP...

WHAT'S WRONG, RAPH?

JUST TELL ME WHY...

...WHY DO PEOPLE WALK THEIR STINKIN' DOGS ON ROOFTOPS?

EEWW...

IT'S A SIGN... I KNEW I SHOULDA STAYED HOME TONIGHT...

HAH! COME ON, RAPH--

NO!

FORGET IT!

RAPH--

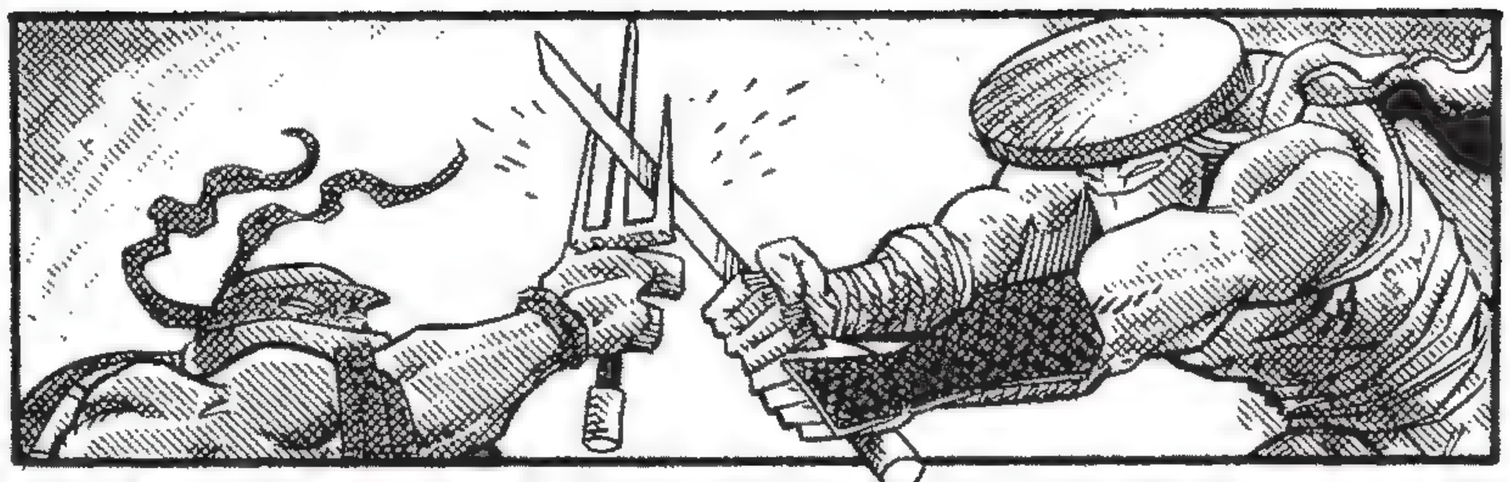
LATER, GUYS...

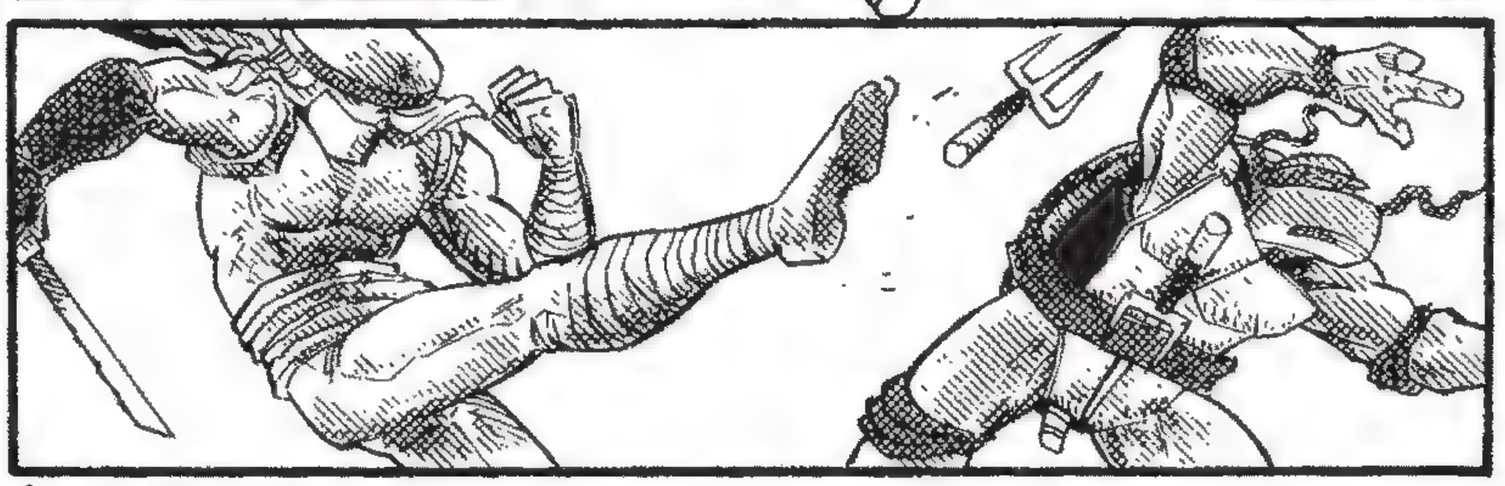
SRAKT

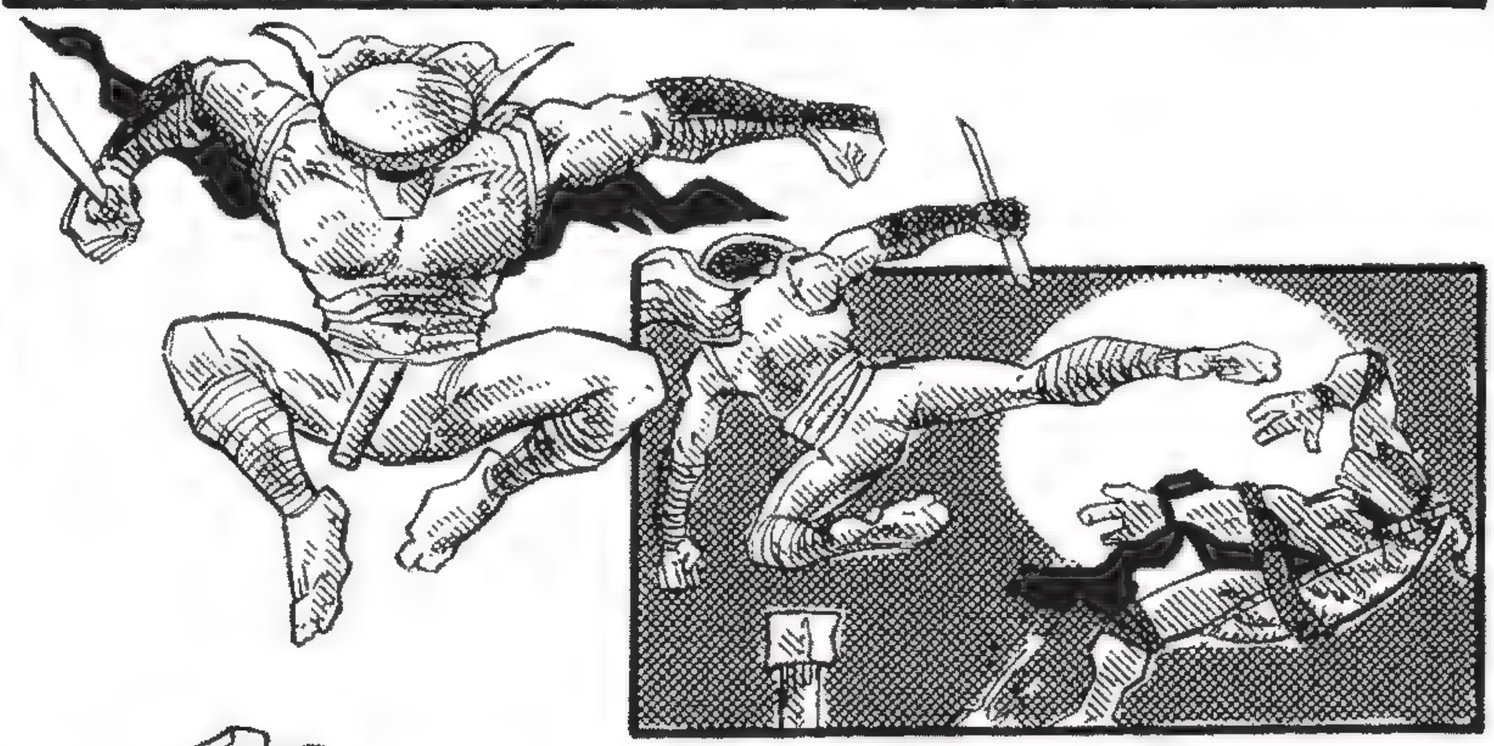
KEK

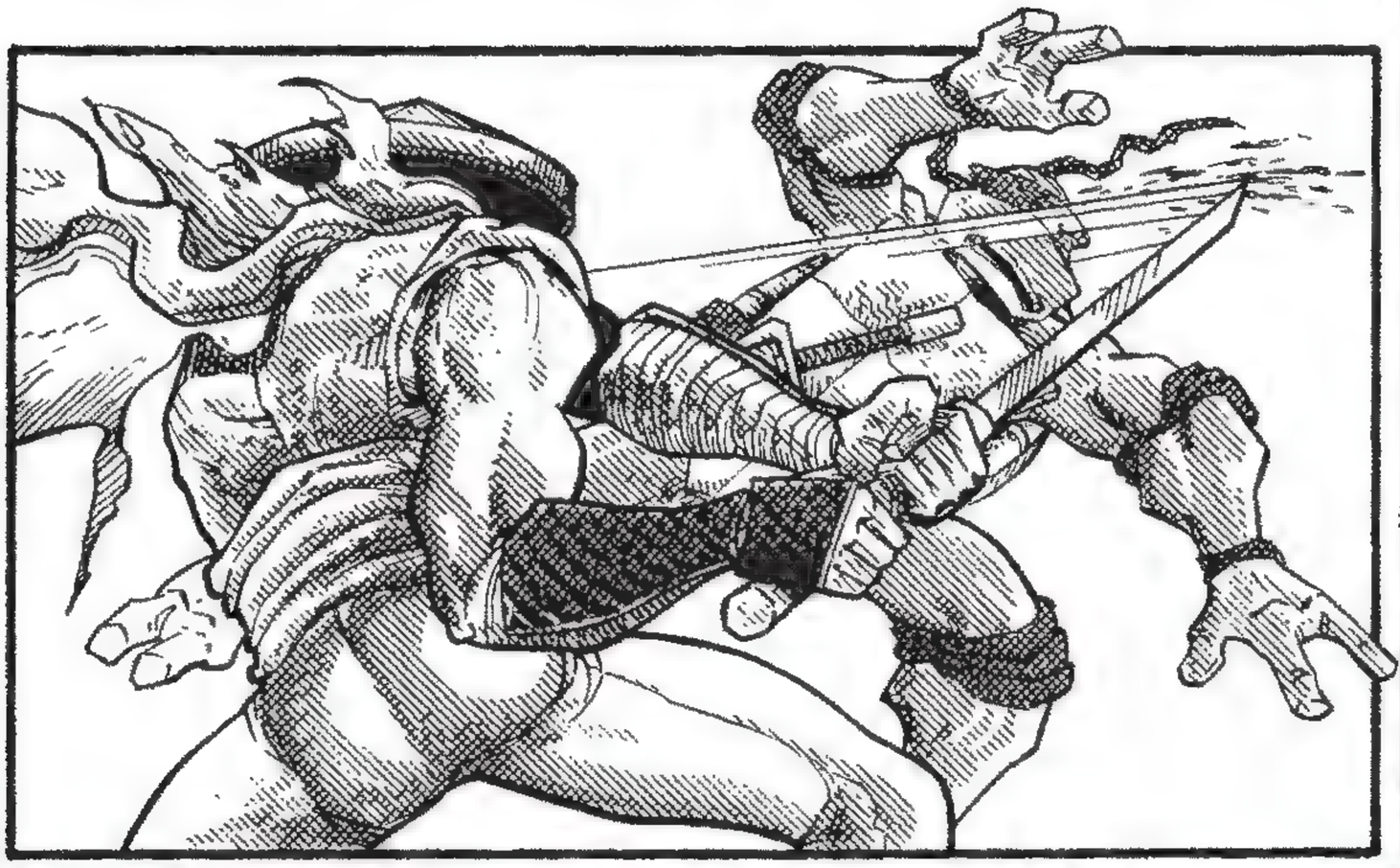
16

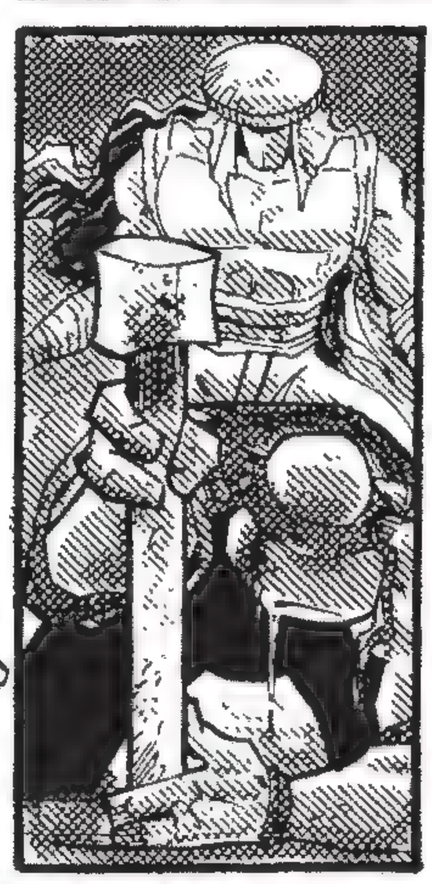
WRK

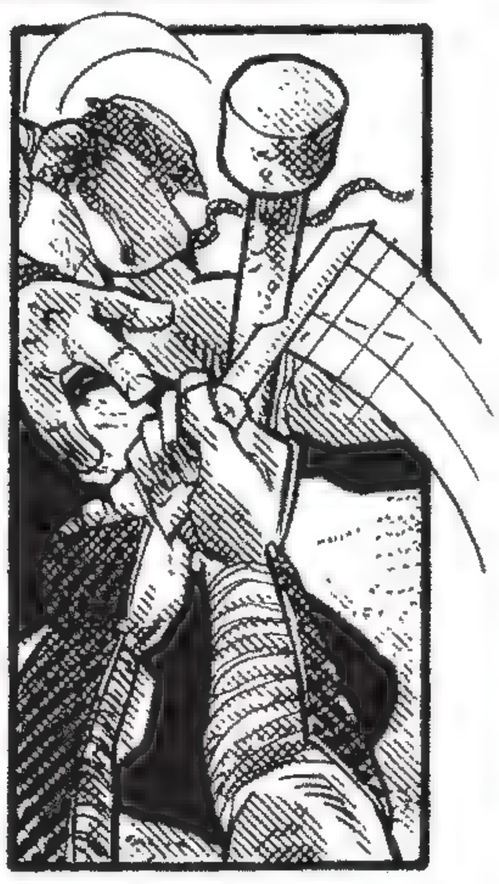












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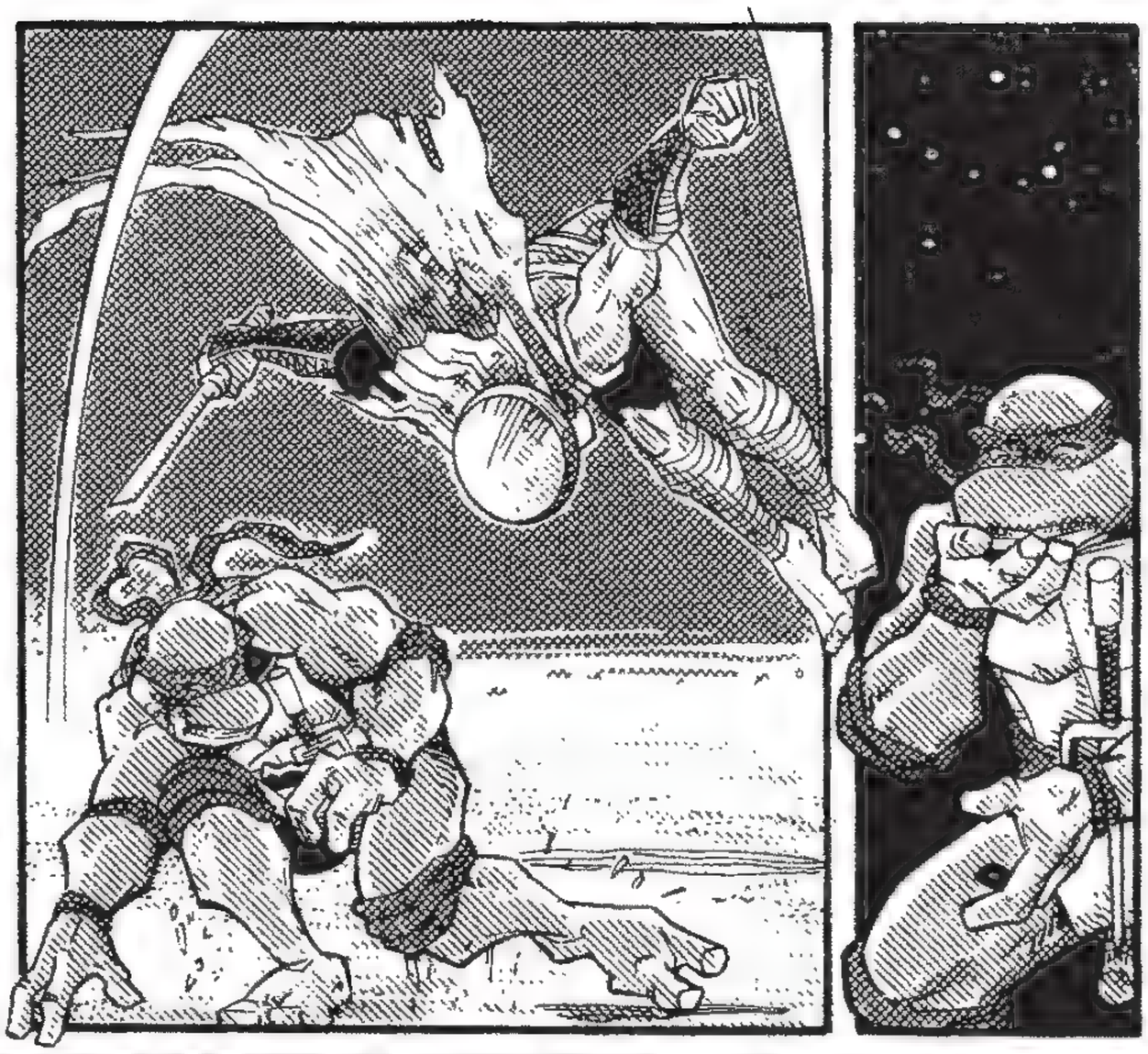
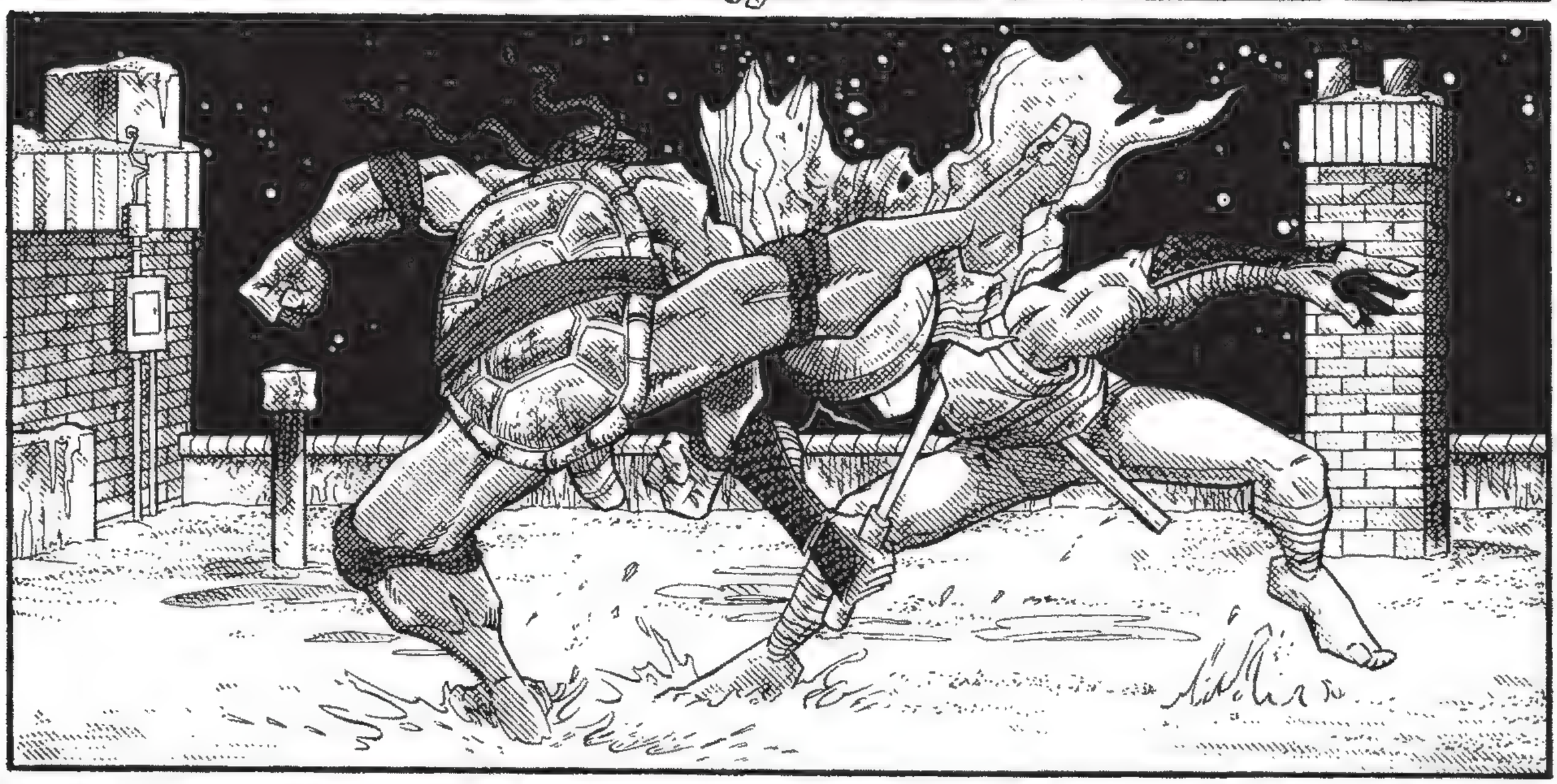
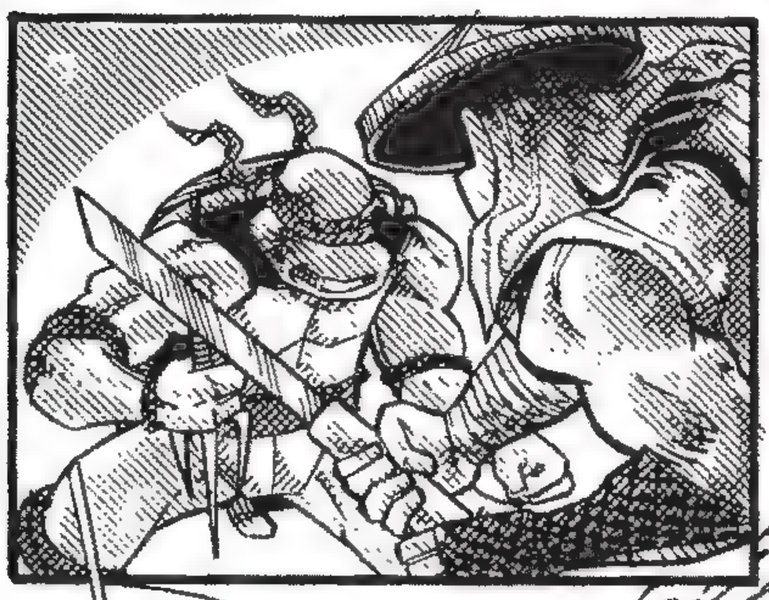
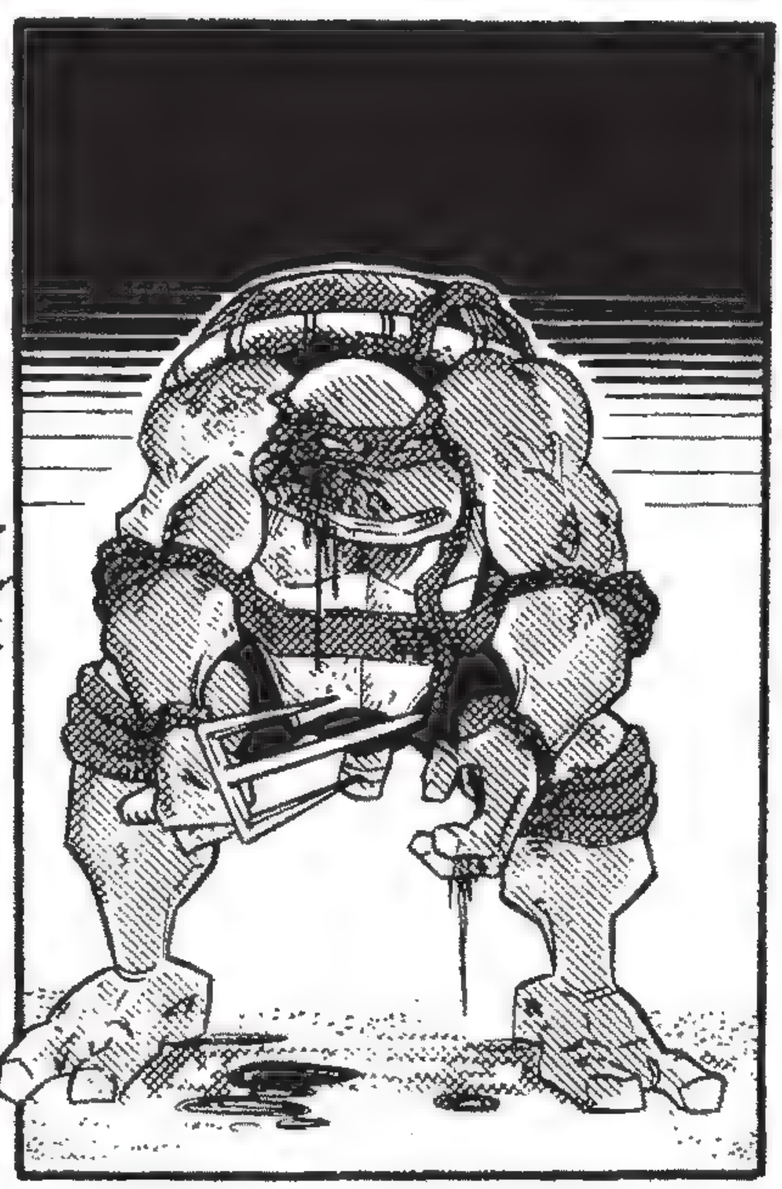
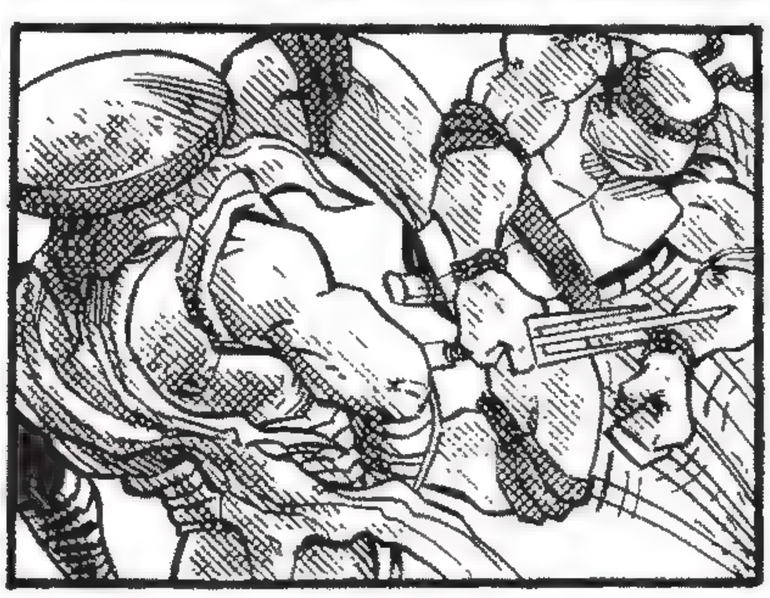
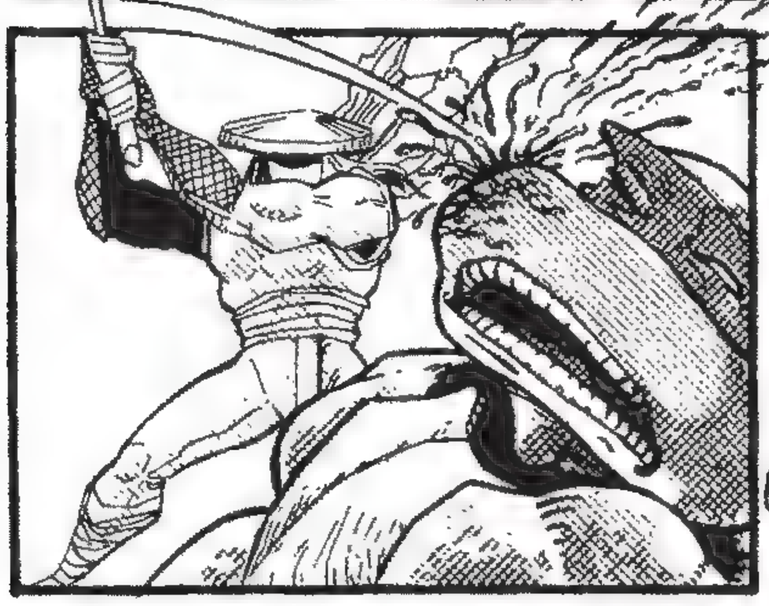












RAPH!

RAPH--WHAT HAPPENED--?!

YOU OKAY?!

YEAH...

DUDE... AMBUSHED ME...

HEY-- HE LOOKS LIKE THAT GUY FROM THE BIG STREET FIGHT!*

...AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, HE'S ONE OF THE SHREDDER'S ELITE PERSONAL GUARD... RAPH AND I TANGLED WITH THEM WHEN WE INVADED THE THE SHREDDER'S HEADQUARTERS...**

HE SEEMS TO KNOW YOU, TOO, LEO...

HMM?

Y-YOU...

YOU ARE THE KAPPA...

...THAT KILLED MY MASTER... OROKU SAKI!

YES.

21

*ISSUE 53

**ISSUE 21

I AM... DUTY BOUND... TO SLAY YOU... TO... AVENGE MY MASTER...

I THINK YOUR AVENGING DAYS ARE OVER, PAL...!

PERHAPS... IN THE NEXT LIFE..

PERHAPS...

22

WHY... ARE YOU HERE?

PERHAPS I AM YOUR COMPANION IN MISERY...

PERHAPS... I AM ALSO PENNED WITHIN THESE WALLS.

OR PERHAPS ... I AM HERE BECAUSE YOU WISH ME TO BE.

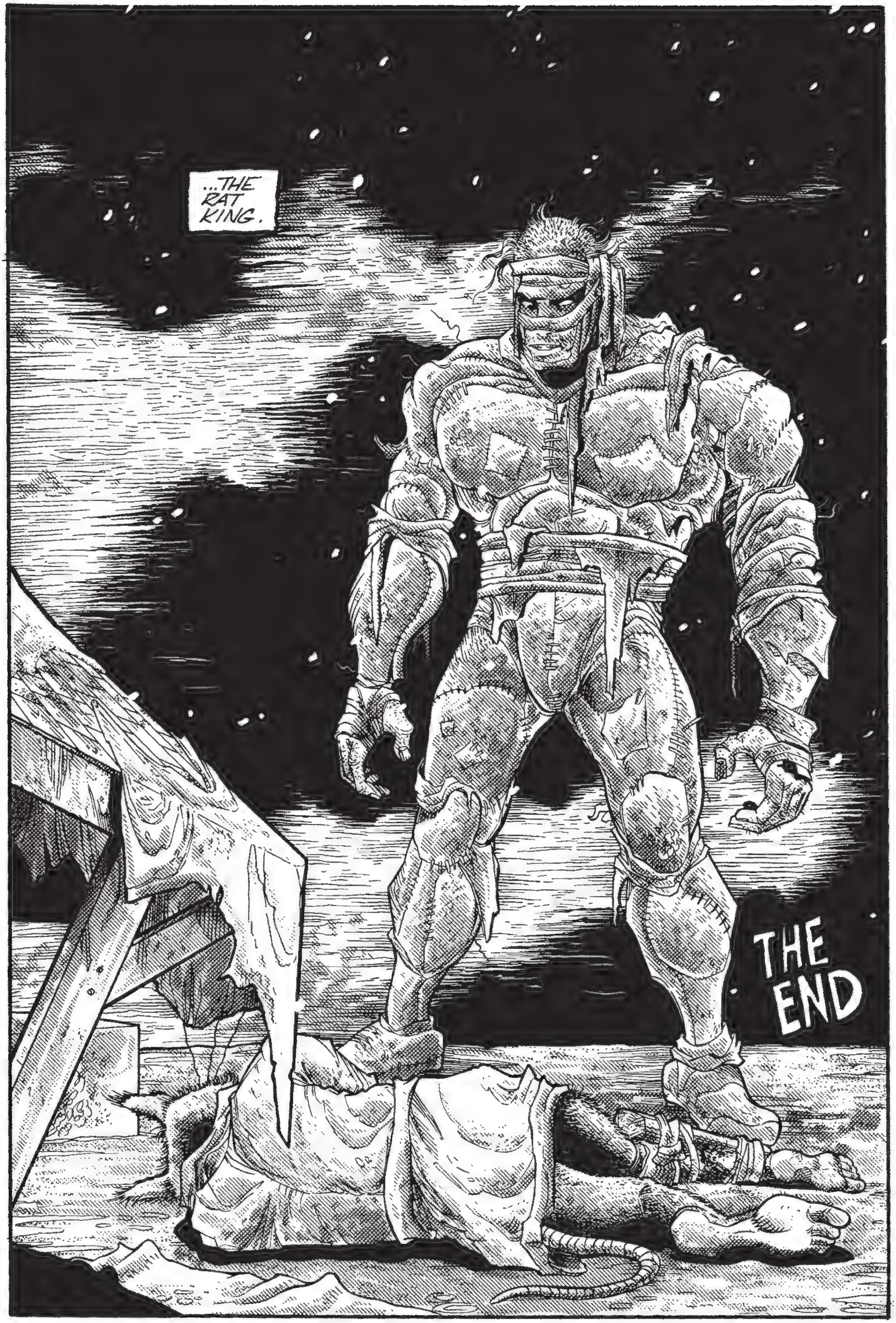
WHO ARE YOU!!?

I HAVE HAD SEVERAL NAMES...

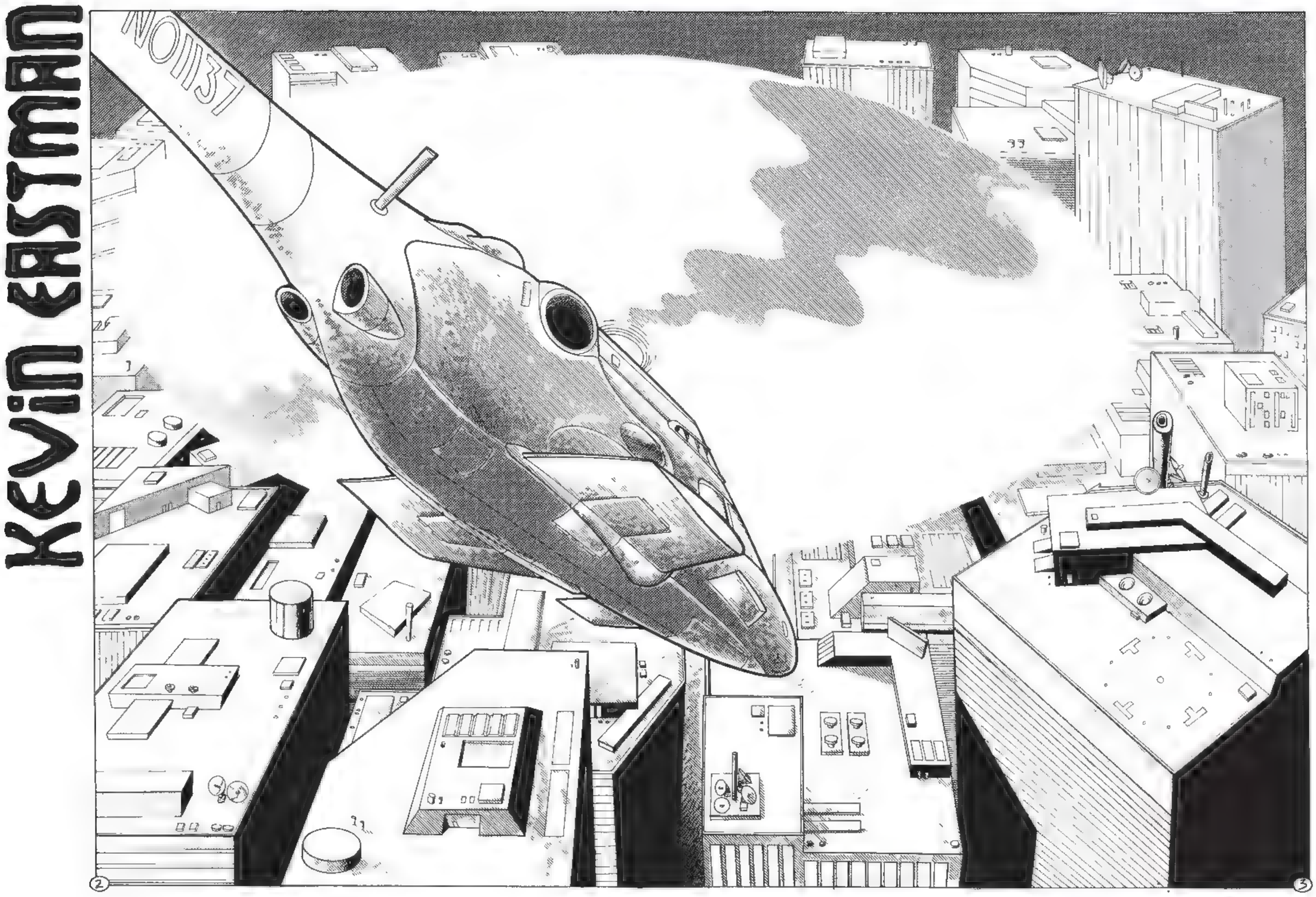
BUT CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES

PERHAPS NONE IS MORE APPROPRIATE THAN THIS...

YOU MAY CALL ME...


...THE RAT KING.
THE END

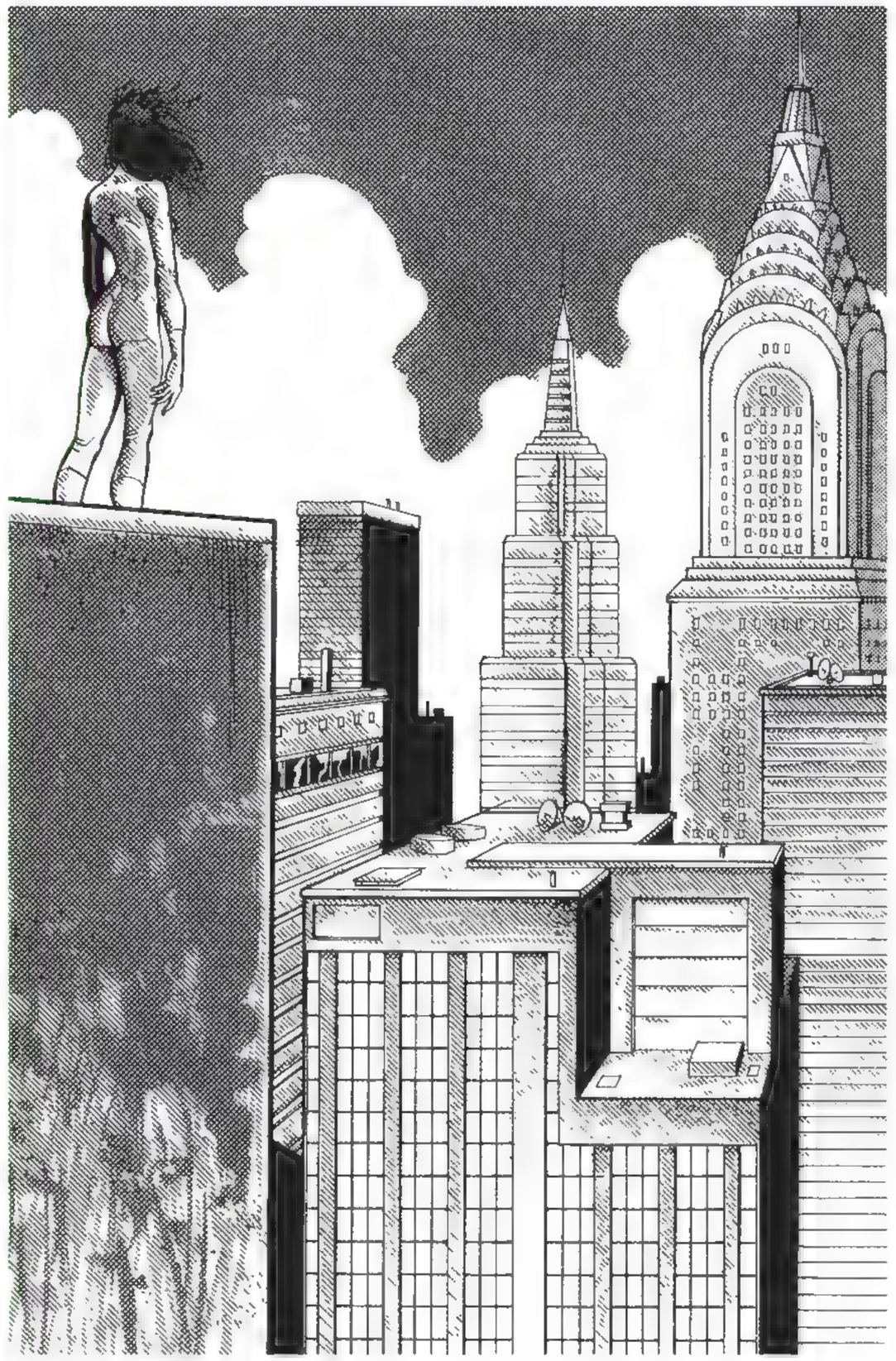
ANNOTATIONS



As I touched on a little bit in my annotations for #54, getting to issue #55—pretty much the center line for the overall series—was exciting for everyone following the storyline, as well as everyone in the company. Looking back at the letters that we were getting from the fans, as well as reaction from people at the signing events we were doing around that time—all the hardcore fans were happy to have the TMNTs back on a regular schedule. They also liked having a good, long storyline to dig their teeth into—and this one was starting to get really, REALLY beefy. Solid work all the way around from the creative team.

Pages 1–5: Karai's arrival in New York City is exceptionally cool. I love the opening splash page and the following two-page spread from Jim as she flies towards the Foot Corporate Head Quarters. She's looking out over the city on the page five splash and without a single line of dialogue it speaks volumes. She has arrived, and there will be hell to pay.

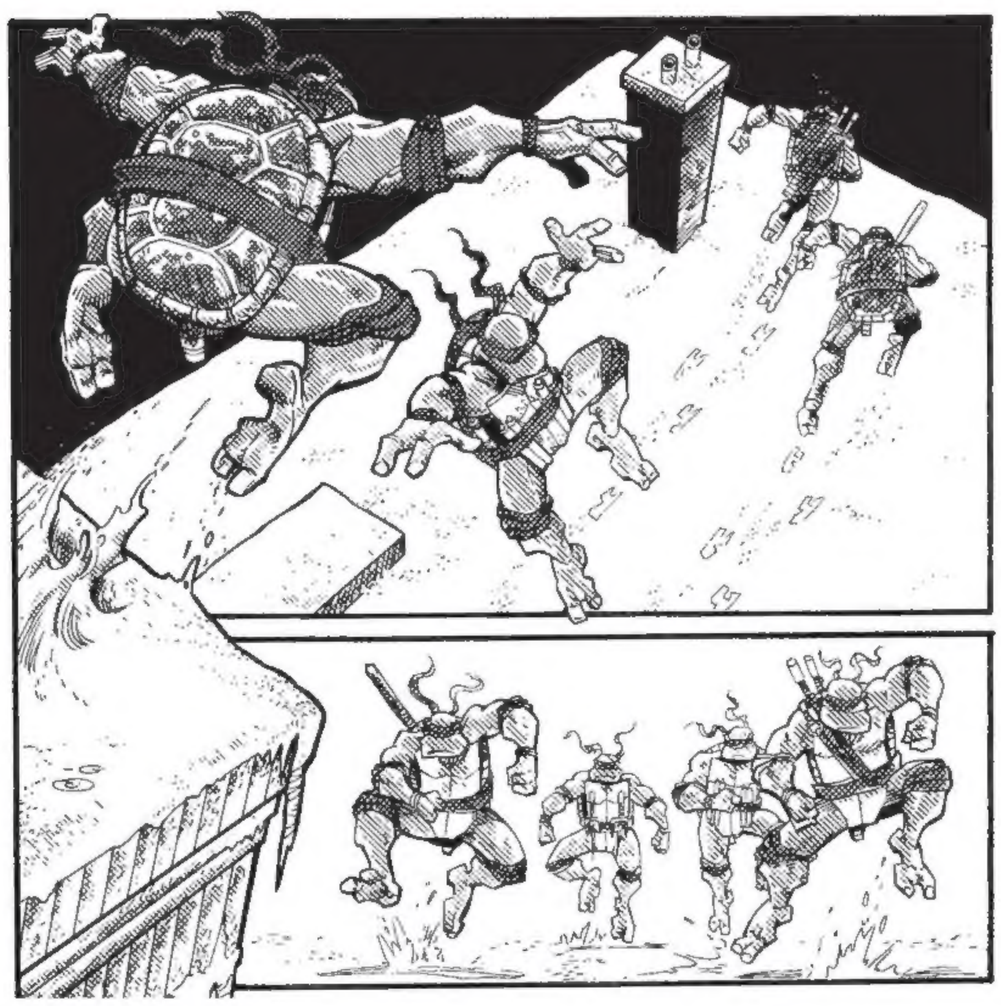
Page 7: Casey's evolution still stands out as one of my favorites overall. He had been such a bruiser and a knucklehead pal of Raph's for so long that by the time he has completely fallen for Gabe, and proposes to her up in the desert, I was completely digging it. And as a fan revisiting it after all this time, I feel like it will have the same power and weight when this scene is re-discovered.



ANNOTATIONS

Page 8–9: April's adventures in Los Angeles totally crack me up here, too. But, having been someone that lived there for so, SOOOO long, we barely scratched the surface of what we could have done. Her story points more than serve the purpose though, and they make me laugh each time I read them.

Pages 13–16: You can never go wrong with training sequences—they are excellent for moving characters around while working through some exposition, and taking a break from a dialogue-heavy section. In this case it's an actual story point. The TMNTs are trying to bond and find focus, not knowing what to REALLY do otherwise, but Raph loses his temper and stomps away—which usually leads to trouble. This finally gives us the chance to get all the guys in front of the story's elusive "rogue" component, a Shredder Foot Elite who informs Leo that the Foot have a bounty on his head for killing Shredder. The rogue then takes his own life to save his honor.



Pages 23–24: Splinter is slipping in and out of consciousness, the visions working wonderfully well not only as a plot device, but also because he who has been trying so hard to find the next level of "being" is getting exactly what he needed—a stronger sense of reality that will bring a greater level of understanding in the end. Like each of the characters, breaking them apart and putting them into situations well outside of their comfort zone is how change and growth take place. Usually anyway, and the final panel here is the best—the Rat King returns! Always one of my favorite "original" TMNT characters, and he has a great role to play here.

This final chapter of *Ultimate Collection Volume Four*—Issue #55—or "City at War" part six, is REALLY the perfect place to break the story. These first eight chapters, issues #48–55, have covered a tremendous amount of ground—breaking the group apart, then breaking them each down individually, sending everyone in all different directions, and re-aligning them based on their discoveries. We gave them different, fresh perspectives, full of all kinds of new complexities that also reflect on each character's intense past.

Although they are not even remotely out of the woods, this new "grounding/course correction" has already affected them on so many levels, and will continue to do so until they come out the other side—smarter and wiser—or no longer among the living.

Either way, it is going to be a pretty fun ride getting there. I can't wait to walk everyone through the next seven issues.

ANNOTATIONS

I always liked the way Craig Farley drew Splinter, and this cover is no exception. Great ear tufts!

The inking looks different in this issue, probably because Keith Aiken has help—Charles Yoakum is credited with "inking assists."

I note also that Eric Talbot is credited with doing the DuoShade "tones" in this issue (and I can definitely see his unique painterly style in places), but in several other issues there is no credit for whoever did the tones. I wonder who did them?

Pages 1–5: I'm not sure why we used five wordless pages—three splash pages and one two-page spread—just to show Karai arriving in New York City, but I guess it worked okay. Looking at it now, it seems a bit wasteful of space.

PETER LAIRD

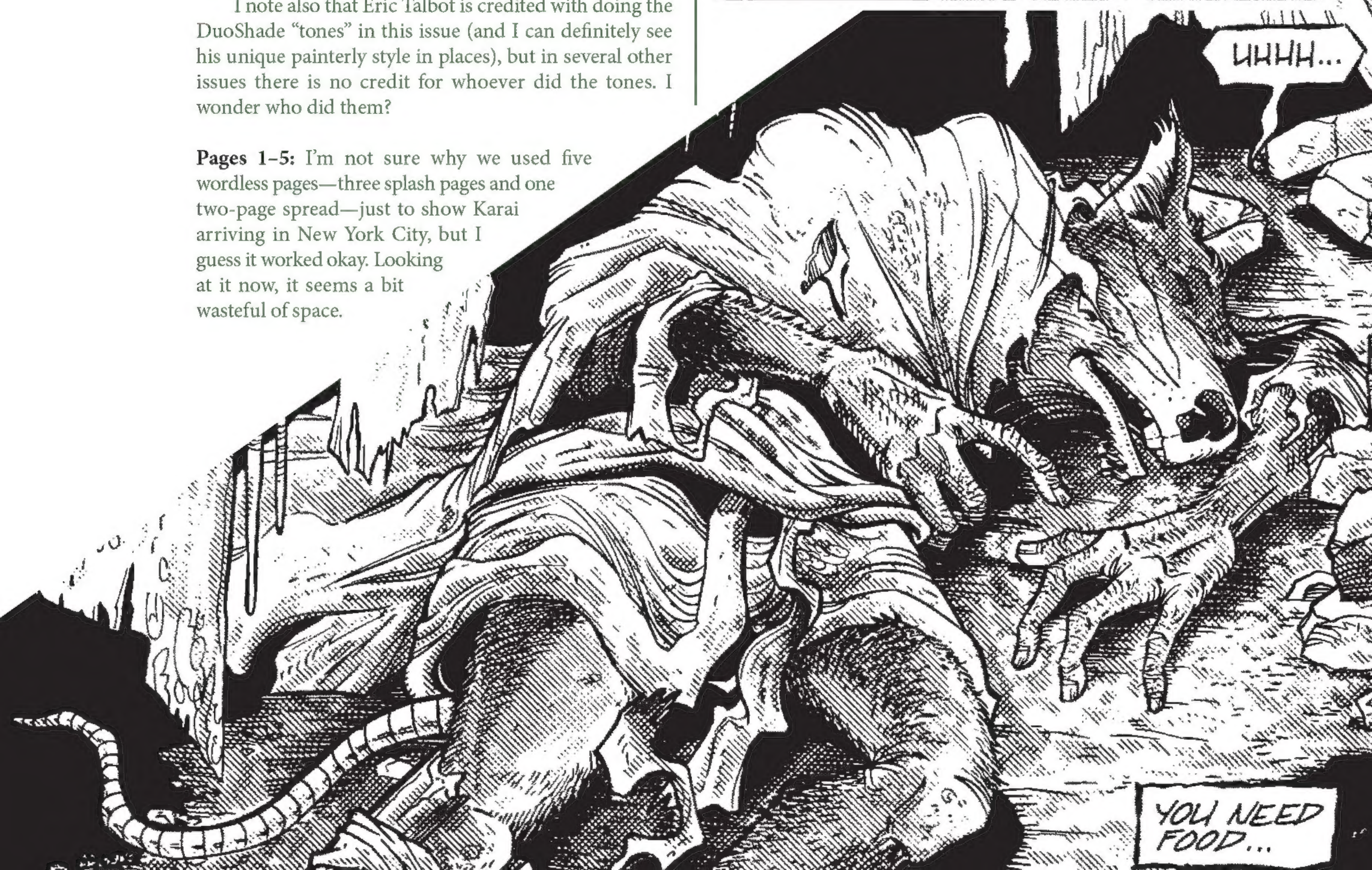
Pages 6–9: Two important subplots are given some exposure in these pages—Casey's burgeoning relationship with pregnant waitress Gabrielle and April's growing disenchantment with Los Angeles.

Page 10: But the most important subplot in this issue begins here with a dramatic full-page drawing of poor Splinter—cold, hungry, in pain… and quite possibly delirious, as he begins to have a conversation with a character who may or may not actually be there.

Pages 14–15: I'm almost positive Jim put this bit in: During a nighttime exercise run with the other Turtles, Raphael steps in dog poop on a rooftop. It's the last straw for him, and he goes off in a huff. Not the greatest idea, it turns out, as…

Page 16–20: …he is ambushed by one of the Shredder's Elite Ninja, and almost gets taken out in a brutal fight.

Page 23–24: The big reveal, as we learn who Splinter has been talking to (or THINKS he has been talking to)—the Rat King!!!



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION: VOLUME 4

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